

15.08/617.



THE
HISTORY
AND
ADVENTURES
OF
GILBLAS.







FRONTISPIECE

Vol III



x

THE ¹⁶/₁₀₅ #3

HISTORY

AND

ADVENTURES

OF

GILBLAS

DE SANTILLANE.

Newly Translated from the FRENCH of

M. DELASAGE.

To which is prefixed

Some ACCOUNT of the AUTHOR'S LIFE.

Illustrated with COPPERPLATES.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME III.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. MASSEY and W. SPROUT, in
the STRAND.

HISTORY



OF THE

ANTIENT

AND

MODERN

ARTS

AND

MINERALOGY

AND

NUMISMATICS

AND

PALEONTOLOGY

AND

ETHNOLOGY

T
Wha
v
c
Gil
P

[v]

THE
CONTENTS
OF

VOLUME THIRD.

BOOK VII.

CHAP. I.

THE Loves of Gil Blas and Dame Lorença Sephora
Page 1

CHAP. II.

*What happened to Gil Blas after he left the Castle of Ley-
va, and with what happy Consequences the bad Suc-
cesses of his Amours were attended.* 9

CHAP. III.

*Gil Blas becomes the Archbishop's Favourite, and the
Person by whose Means his Favours are granted.* 15

CHAP. IV.

The Archbishop takes an Apoplectic Fit. The Dilemma Gil Blas is in, and how he extricates himself. 21

CHAP. V.

The Step Gil Blas took after he was dismissed by the Archbishop. He accidentally meets with the Licentiate whom he had obliged. The Proof that Priest gave him of his Gratitude. 25

CHAP. VI.

Gil Blas goes to see a Play at Grenada, and is surprised at the Sight of one of the Actresses; the Consequences of it. 28

CHAP. VII.

The Story of Laura. 34

CHAP. VIII.

The Reception the Players at Grenada gave to Gil Blas. He meets with an old Acquaintance behind the Scenes. 48

CHAP. IX.

An Account of a particular Sort of a Man he supped with that Evening, and what passed between them. 52

CHAP. X.

The Commission which Gil Blas received from the Marquis

CONTENTS.

vii

de Marialva, and how he discharged it. 55

CHAP. XI.

Gil Blas is thunderstruck by a Piece of News which he hears. 59

CHAP. XII.

Gil Blas lodges at a ready furnished House, where he becomes acquainted with Don Hannibal de Chinchilla: an Account of him, and his Business at Madrid. 62

CHAP. XIII.

Gil Blas and his dear Friend Fabricio meet at Court; their mutual Joy. Where they both went; and the curious Conversation that ensued. 70

CHAP. XIV.

Gil Blas is introduced by Fabricio to the Service of Count Galiano, a Sicilian Nobleman. 80

CHAP. XV.

Of Gil Blas's Employment in Count Galiano's House. 84

CHAP. XVI.

Count Galiano's great Concern for an Accident which happened to his Ape. Gil Blas takes ill; the Consequences of his Illness. 89



B O O K VIII.

C H A P. I.

Gil Blas meets with a good Acquaintance, and gets a Post, which makes up for Count Gallano's Ingratitude. The History of Don Valerio de Luna. 97

C H A P. II.

Gil Blas is introduced to the Duke of Lerma, and is received into the Number of his Secretaries. He is set to Work, and the Duke is pleased with his Performance. 103

C H A P. III.

Gil Blas finds that he must meet with Mortifications in his new Post; the Concern which this Intelligence gives him, and how he is obliged to alter his Conduct. 108

C H A P. IV.

Gil Blas ingratiates himself into the Favour of the Duke of Lerma, and is intrusted with an important Secret. 112

C H A P. V.

Gil Blas meets with Joy, Honour, and Grief. 114

C H A P. VI.

The Method Gil Blas takes to inform the Duke of Lerma

CONTENTS.

ix

of his Necessity, and what Treatment he met with from him.

118

CHAP. VII.

The good Use he made of his 1500 Ducats; the first Affair in which he was engaged; and the Profits arising from thence.

123

CHAP. VIII.

The History of Don Roger de Rada.

125

CHAP. IX.

How Gil Blas made an immense Fortune in a short Time: and what great Airs he gave himself.

135

CHAP. X.

Gil Blas becomes quite corrupted at Court. What Commission the Count de Lemos intrusts him with; and how that Nobleman and he engaged themselves in an Intrigue.

143

CHAP. XI.

Catalina receives a secret Visit and several Presents from the Prince of Spain.

151

CHAP. XII.

Gil Blas is greatly perplexed when he discovers who Catalina is; the Precaution he was obliged to take.

156

CONTENTS.

CHAP. XIII.

Gil Blas still acts up to his former Character. What Impression the News he hears of his Family makes upon him. Fabricio and he quarrel. 159



BOOK IX.

CHAP. I.

Scipio is desirous of having Gil Blas enter into the Marriage State, for which Purpose he proposes to him a celebrated wealthy Goldsmith's Daughter. What Steps they take in that Affair. 164

CHAP. II.

How Gil Blas remembered Don Alphonso de Leyva, and what Service he did him merely out of Vaniey. 169

CHAP. III.

Great Preparations are made for Gil Blas's Marriage, which are rendered abortive by an unforeseen Adventure. 172

CHAP. IV.

In what Manner Gil Blas was treated in the Tower of Segovia, and how he came to know for what Reason he had been carried thither. 174

CONTENTS.

xi

CHAP. V.

What Reflections he made that Night before he slept; and of the Noise that waked him. 179

CHAP. VI.

The Story of Don Gaston de Cogollos, and Donna Helena de Galisteo. 183

CHAP. VII.

Gil Blas receives a Visit from Scipio, who comes to the Tower of Segovia to seek his Master, and tells him a great deal of News. 201

CHAP. VIII.

Scipio makes his first Journey to Madrid. What was the Motive and the Success. Gil Blas falls sick. The Consequences of his Sickness. 205

CHAP. IX.

Scipio goes a second Time to Madrid. How and upon what Conditions he had Gil Blas restored to Liberty. What Course they both took on being delivered from the Tower of Segovia, and what Conversation passed between them. 210

CHAP. X.

What they did on their Arrival at Madrid. Gil Blas meets his Friend the Baron de Steinbach in the Street: the Success of this Rencontre. 213

CONTENTS

CHAP. V.

What Right the People have to the Property of the State, and of the Right of the State to the Property of the People.

CHAP. VI.

The Right of the People to the Property of the State, and of the Right of the State to the Property of the People.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Right of the People to the Property of the State, and of the Right of the State to the Property of the People.



Of the Right of the People to the Property of the State, and of the Right of the State to the Property of the People.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Right of the People to the Property of the State, and of the Right of the State to the Property of the People.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Right of the People to the Property of the State, and of the Right of the State to the Property of the People.



a
f
h
b
y
n
e
a
n



THE
ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS
DE SANTILLANE.

BOOK VII.

CHAP. I.

The Loves of Gil Blas and Dame Lorença Sephora.



I WENT to Xelva, on purpose to restore the three thousand ducats to Samuel Simon, which we had stolen from him; and I confess I was tempted on the road to put this money to my own use, by way of making a fortunate beginning of my stewardship, which I might have done, without having my fidelity suspected either by Don Alphonso or his father, had I but taken a journey for five or six days, and returned with an appearance of having done the business: but I did not yield

VOL. III.

A

to the temptation; I surmounted it like a young man of honour, greatly to the credit of a lad who had been much in company with rogues. Many people who are accustomed to the conversation of none but honest men would not have been so scrupulous, particularly those who are intrusted with sums which they can conceal without hazard of discovery, or hurting their character.

After having given the merchant his money, according to his expectation, I returned to the castle of Leyva. I found the Count de Polan was set out for Toledo, accompanied by Julia and Don Fernard. I saw my new master was more than ever captivated with Seraphina, his Seraphina enchanted with him, and Don Cæsar delighted with having them both in his possession. I used all my endeavours to gain the friendship of so good a father, in which I succeeded. I was appointed steward in the family, I regulated all the affairs, received and paid money, and had an entire authority over the servants: but I was careful not to abuse that power, by making a bad use of it, as many stewards do. I did not discharge those domestics with whom I was not pleased, nor expected others to be entirely submissive to my will; if they applied immediately to Don Cæsar, or his son, to ask any favour of them, instead of opposing their interest, I always exerted myself in their favour. The marks of esteem which I daily received from my masters inspired me with zeal for their welfare; and I studied their good alone. My management had nothing strange in it; in short, such a steward is not to be got at any time.

While I was thus enjoying my situation, Love, as if jealous of what the blind goddess Fortune had done for me, was determined I should be indebted to him also for something, and accordingly inspired Dame Lo-



rença Sephora, chief waiting-woman to Seraphina, with a violent passion for Master Steward. To speak of things like a true historian, my conquest was near fifty years old; but notwithstanding this, an agreeable countenance, fine eyes, and a lively air, made her not unfit for an object for intrigue. I only wished her complexion to have been a little more ruddy, for she was very pale; a circumstance I attributed to the strict preservation of her virtue.

For some time the lady gained upon me by such winning glances as plainly expressed her love; but instead of answering her passion, I at first avoided perceiving her intention, which behaviour made me appear to her imagination a mere novice in love, which she was not displeased at, and thought it needless to confine herself intirely to that dumb language with a young lad, whom she thought less knowing than he really was; and that I might not be ignorant of her sentiments for the future, she declared them in due form at our first conversation. She did it like a person who was not a stranger to those things; she affected to be out of countenance while she was speaking; and after having expressed herself freely, covered her face, to make me imagine she was ashamed that I should see her weakness. I was obliged to surrender, and appeared very sensible of her goodness, though vanity, rather than inclination, was the cause. I acted the passionate lover so dexterously, that I brought her reproaches upon me. She indeed reproved me, but in so mild a way, that while she begged of me to be moderate, she did not appear angry. I believe I might have gone farther, if my lady had not been afraid that I should conceive a bad opinion of her virtue, if I made too easy a conquest. Thus we separated till the next interview; Sephora persuaded that her feigned resistance made me

imagine her a pure virgin, and I pleased with the expectation of soon finishing this adventure.

When things were in this situation, one of Don Caesar's footmen brought me some intelligence, which lessened my joy. He was one of those busy fellows who pry into every thing that passes in a family. As he was a person who was very attentive to serve me in every thing, and made it his study to entertain me daily with something new, he told me one morning that he had made an entertaining discovery, which he would acquaint me with, if I would not discover it, as it was concerning Sephora, whose resentment he was afraid of. I promised him secrecy, as I was very ready to know any thing concerning her, though I affected an indifference to him. He told me that Lorença Sephora introduced the surgeon of the village, a genteel young man, secretly into her room every evening, where he generally staid a considerable time with her. He added with a sneer, that it was possible their behaviour was very innocent; but a young man being in a woman's chamber gives great room for scandal.

This story disturbed me as much as if I had really been in love; yet I affected to laugh at it, though it gave me concern: but as soon as I was alone, I made myself amends for the restraint I was obliged to put upon myself, I raged, swore, and was at a loss what course to take. Sometimes I despised her, and thought of leaving her, without coming to any explanation with her; and sometimes I thought it was my duty to banish the surgeon from the house, resolving to call him to an account, which I determined to do. I hid myself, and saw him in the evening go into the lady's chamber. This was sufficient to raise my fury. I left the castle, and went to the road where he must pass by; there I stood fixed, and my desire of fighting him eve-

ry minute encreased. At last my rival appeared; I advanced with great courage, and I do not know how the devil it happened, but I found myself seized in a moment with great fear, like one of Homer's heroes, which retarded my steps, and I was as much confused as Paris, when he advanced to fight Menelaus. I began to consider my man; he seemed very stout, and his sword appeared wondrous long, which made an impression upon me. Notwithstanding this, I had the courage to advance, and draw my rapier.

Alarmed at my action, he cried, Signior Gil Blas, what is the matter? Wherefore all these preparations? I suppose you are inclined to be merry? No, Mr. Surgeon, answered I, you are mistaken; I am in a very serious humour, and desire to know if you are as brave as gallant. Do not imagine that I will let you quietly possess the favours of the lady you have been visiting at the castle. By St. Come! cried the surgeon, bursting into a loud laugh, here is a droll adventure! Good God! how deceitful are appearances! From these words imagining that he had no greater stomach to fighting than myself, I became more insolent, and said, Friend, that will not pass; do not think that I will be satisfied with a bare denial. I see then, replied he, that I shall be obliged to speak, to prevent the mischief which might happen to either of us, and I must reveal a secret; although people of our profession cannot be too cautious in such affairs. If Signiora Lorença admits me privately into her chamber, it is to conceal her malady from the servants; she has an inveterate cancer in her back, which I dress every night. This is the cause of the visits whereat you are so alarmed; you may therefore make yourself easy upon that head. But, continued he, if you are not satisfied with this declaration, and are absolutely determined to fight, speak the word,

I am your man. This said, he drew his long rapier, which made me tremble, and stood in a posture of defence. It is enough, said I to him, sheathing my sword, I am not so brutal as not to hear reason: after what you have told me, I am entirely reconciled to you; let us embrace. He presently perceived by this discovery, that I was not so inflexible as I at first appeared to be, and laughing, put up his rapier. In short, we parted the best friends imaginable.

From that time, Sephora presented nothing but disagreeable ideas to my imagination, and I avoided all the opportunities she gave me of conversing with her in private, which I did with so much care and affectation, that she perceived my disgust. Struck with so great a change, she resolved to know the cause, and at last finding an opportunity to talk with me apart; Pray tell me, Mr. Steward, said she, why you so much avoid the sight of me? I made some advances, it is true, but you made suitable returns. Call to mind, I beseech you, the private conversation we had together; you was then all fire, but you are now as cold as ice. What is the meaning of all this? This was a very delicate question for an ingenuous man, and of course it greatly embarrassed me. I have forgot the answer which I made, but it was as disagreeable to her as possible. One would have thought by Sephora's mild and modest air, that she was a perfect lamb, but when enraged, a very tygress. With a look of indignation, she told me, she thought she did much honour to a pitiful fellow like me, to discover sentiments which would have given the greatest pleasure to noble cavaliers; adding, I am very properly served, for condescending so much to a sorry adventurer like you.

I should have been extremely pleased had she stopped here; but her rage set her tongue a running, and

she loaded me with reproaches, every one worse than another. I expected to have bore it all with calmness, and considered, that by despising the triumph of her virtue, I was guilty of a crime which no woman can forgive: but I was too passionate to suffer her ill language, which a sensible man would have laughed at; I lost all patience, and replied, Madam, we ought not to despise any person; if the noble cavaliers you speak of saw your back, I am certain their curiosity would go no farther. As soon as I uttered these words, the furious dame gave me the most violent blow on the ear that an affronted woman could give. I allowed her no opportunity for a second; but by a precipitate retreat avoided a shower of blows which she would have bestowed upon me.

I was thankful I had got done with this troublesome affair, expecting that I had no more to apprehend, as the lady had taken revenge at her own hand, and that she would never mention the affair, for her own honour; and fifteen days expired without my hearing a syllable of the matter. I was beginning to forget it myself, when I was told that Sephora was ill. I had good nature enough to be sorry when I heard of it, and pitied her, imagining she had fallen a victim to her unhappy love. I was sorry that I should occasion her illness, and though I could not love her, I pitied her: but my supposition was wrong founded; her love was now turned to hatred, and she was studying mischief against me.

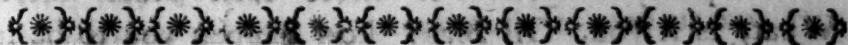
Being alone with Don Alphonso one morning, I perceived him very dull and thoughtful; I respectfully desired to know the reason of it. He replied, it gives me concern to find Seraphina so weak, ungrateful, and unjust. Does this surprise you? observing I seemed astonished at what he had said: in short, continued he,

it is really so. I am ignorant what reason you have given the duenna Lorença to dislike you, but it is certain you are become so odious to her, that she says, if you do not leave this castle immediately, her death is certain. You may be assured that Seraphina, who has a regard for you, at first opposed her hatred, which could not be gratified, without ungratitude and injustice; but she is a woman, and has a tender regard for Sephora, who brought her up; she is in a manner a mother to her, and would accuse herself with her death, if she did not satisfy her desires. As for my part, notwithstanding the love I have for Seraphina, I will never have the false complaisance to agree to her desires in this respect. All the duenna's in Spain shall die rather than I consent to have a young man, whom I esteem as a brother and a friend, removed.

When Alphonso was done speaking, I said to him, I am born to be the sport of fortune; my lord, I hoped she would not persecute me in your house, where I had the prospect of many happy days; but I must determine to leave it, notwithstanding it is so agreeable to me. No, replied the generous son of Don Cæsar, I will endeavour to make Seraphina hear reason; it shall not be said that you have been sacrificed to the caprice of a duenna, who has had too much regard shewn to her in other respects. I replied, Sir, you will only vex Seraphina, by contradicting her will; I would much rather go, than run the hazard of making any difference between such a happy pair: by my stay, I could never console myself for such a misfortune.

Don Alphonso desired I would not take such a determination. I found he was resolved in his intention of supporting me; so that if I had chosen to stay, Lorença would certainly have met with a blank. Sometimes I was so much piqued at her, that I could have

exposed her; but when I reflected, that by revealing her shame, I should stab a poor creature to the heart, of whose misfortunes I was the cause, and who by all appearance was drawing near to death, by two incurable distempers, my resentment was changed into pity: and I thought, that as I was so dangerous a creature, I should leave the castle, to re-establish peace there: which I did next morning before day-light, without taking leave of my two masters, for fear they should oppose my intentions. I left in my chamber a paper, containing a faithful account of my stewardship.



CHAP. II.

What happened to Gil Blas after he left the Castle of Leyva, and with what happy Consequences the bad Success of his Amours were attended.

I RODE upon a good horse of my own, and had in my portmanteau two hundred pistoles, the greatest part of which I had got from the banditti that were killed, and the three thousand ducats which were stolen from Samuel Simon; for Don Alphonso had restored the whole sum out of his pocket. Wherefore looking upon these effects as all my own property, I enjoyed them without scruple. I was now master of a stock, which prevented me from caring much for the future, besides the confidence people of my age have of their own merit; and moreover, I had an asylum at Toledo, which was not disagreeable. I made no doubt but the Count de Polan would be glad to give a handsome reception, and a lodging in his house, to one of his deliverers; but I looked upon this nobleman as the last resource, and determined, before I applied to him, to

travel over the kingdoms of Murcia and Grenada, which I had a great desire to see. With this intention, I took the road to Almanza, and continued my journey from city to city, till I arrived at Grenada, without meeting with any particular accident. I thought fortune seemed willing to leave me at peace, after having plagued me a good deal: but alas! she was only preparing fresh persecutions for me, as will be seen in the sequel.

Among the first people I met in the streets of Grenada, was Don Fernando de Leyva, son-in-law to the Count de Polan, as was also Don Alphonso. We were equally surprised to meet each other there. What, is it you, Gil Blas? how happen you to be in this city? what has brought you here? My Lord, replied I, if you are surprised to see me in this part of the world, you will be much more so when you know the reason of my leaving the service of Don Cæsar and his son. I then told him all that had passed between Sephora and me, without concealing any circumstance. The adventure afforded him much diversion. He then turned serious; Friend, said he, I will be your mediator in this affair, I will write to my sister-in-law. No, my Lord, I replied, I beg you may not do so. I did not leave the castle of Leyva with an intention to return to it so soon. If you please, you may make another use of the regard you have for me; if any of your friends or acquaintance want a steward, or secretary, I would beg of you to speak in my favour; I hope he will have no occasion to complain that you have recommended a bad servant to him. He replied, with all my heart, I will do what you desire me. I came to Grenada to pay a visit to an old aunt, who is sick, and will in three weeks leave this place, and set out for Lorqui, where I left Julia. I lodge there, said he, pointing to a house at a little distance; come to

me in two or three days, probably I may have found you a post.

Accordingly, the first time he saw me he told me, The Archbishop of Grenada, my friend and relation, has occasion for a young man of learning, who writes well, to make fair copies of his writings, for he is a great author. He has composed a vast number of homilies, and studies more every day, which meet with great applause. As I thought you would be a proper person for him, I recommended you, and he has agreed to take you: go and present yourself to him in my name. You may judge by the reception he gives you, whether I have spoken advantageously of you or not.

This was as good an offer as I could wish for; therefore having dressed myself in the best manner I could, to appear before the prelate, I went one morning to the Archbishop's palace. Were I to imitate the writers of romance, I should give a pompous description of this episcopal palace of Grenada; I should enlarge upon the structure of the building, praise the richness of the furniture, describe the statues and pictures, which were so elegant; in short, I should not spare the reader the least tittle of the stories they represented: but I will content myself with saying, that its magnificence equalled the royal palace.

There were in the apartments a number of ecclesiastics and gentlemen of the sword, most of whom were his Grace's officers, almoners, gentlemen-ushers, and valets de chambre. From the appearance they made, one would have taken them for noblemen, rather than domestics, their dress was so elegant, and their behaviour so haughty and assuming. I really could not help laughing at them inwardly. I thought these fellows bore the yoke of servitude with great ease; if they felt it, they could not be so haughty. There was a grave

jolly man stood at the door of the archbishop's closet, to open and shut it occasionally; I addressed myself to him, and civilly asked him, if it was possible to speak with his Grace? he stiffly said, I might wait a little, his Grace would soon come out to go to mass, and he would give me a moment's audience as he passed. I made him no answer, but thought I would wait patiently, and enter into conversation with some of the officers: but they, without making any answers to what I said, began to examine me from head to foot, and scornfully smiled at each other, making a jest of the liberty I had taken to mix in conversation with them. I own I was humbled to see myself treated in such a manner by servants, and had not recovered from my confusion, when the closet-door opened, and discovered the Archbishop. Upon which a profound silence prevailed among the officers, who immediately laid aside their insolent carriage, and assumed a respectful look in the presence of their master.

This prelate was in the sixty-ninth year of his age, pretty much of the same make as my uncle the canon Giles Perez, plump and short. He was bandy-legged, and bald, having no more hair but a small tuft on the back part of his head, which obliged him to cover his head with a fine linen cap. Notwithstanding his figure, I thought he had the air of a person of quality; it undoubtedly was, because I knew he was one. We people of an inferior rank look upon great men with a prepossession, which gives them an air of greatness that they really do not possess.

The archbishop directly advanced to me, and in a mild tone enquired, what my business was with him? I told him I was the young man whom Don Fernando de Leyva had told him of. He gave me no time to say more, but exclaimed, Oh! are you the man he commended so much? I take you into my service; you are

a valuable acquisition, stay here. So saying, he went out, supported by two gentlemen of the horse, after having heard some ecclesiastics, who had something to communicate. He was hardly gone, when the same people who disdained my company before, now courted it. They directly came about me, and shewed me all the civility they could, expressing their joy at my having become one of the officers of the household. When they heard what their master said to me, they were curious to know on what footing I was retained; but I was not so obliging as to satisfy their curiosity, out of revenge for the contempt they shewed me so lately.

It was not long before his Grace returned. He desired me to follow him into his closet, that he might talk to me in private. I suspected that he wanted to try my understanding, so was upon my guard, and was determined to weigh every word. He first examined me in the learned languages, and found I answered him to his satisfaction, being conversant in the Greek and Latin authors. Then he, as I expected, tried me in Logick, and found me a compleat master of it. He seemed surpris'd, and said, I find your education has not been neglected; now let me see your hand-writing. I therefore took a sheet of paper out of my pocket, which I had wrote for that purpose; the prelate seemed very well pleased with it, and said he would return his friend Don Fernando thanks for procuring him such a servant.

The arrival of some noblemen of Grenada, who came to dine with the archbishop, interrupted us. I withdrew among the officers, who loaded me with their civilities. I went to dinner with them at the usual time, and observed them during the repast as much as they possibly could observe me. The ecclesiastics appeared like faints; what an outward shew of wisdom

they had! I paid great respect to the place where I was, never suspecting that it might be counterfeit; as if there were not such examples among the fathers of the church.

I was seated near an old valet de chambre, named Melchior de la Ronda, who was at great pains to help me to the best morsels: the attention which he paid me, inspired me with a respect for him, and he was delighted with my polite behaviour. After dinner he said softly to me, Signior Cavalier, I should be glad of a little conversation with you: and he took me into a retired part of the palace, where he could not be overheard, and began this conversation. My son, from the first time I saw you, I discovered in myself an inclination for you: as a proof of it, I will repose my confidence in you. Consider you are here in a house where the good and bad live promiscuously together: it will be long before you know what ground you walk upon. I will save you a great deal of trouble, by informing you of the characters of all: by which means you may more easily conduct yourself.

I will begin, said he, with his Grace. He is a very pious prelate, who is continually employed in instructing the people, by sermons of his own composition, full of excellent morals. About twenty years ago he left the court, and gave himself up entirely to the zeal for his flock. He is a learned man, and a great orator; his whole delight is in preaching, and his hearers are ravished with admiration. Probably there might be some vanity in the case, but it is not in the power of men to penetrate the heart. It would not become me to repeat the faults of a person who maintains me. If it was allowable in me to disapprove of any thing in my master, I would blame his severity; instead of indulging the weakness of his ecclesiastics, he punishes

them with too much rigour. He persecutes, unmercifully, those who, depending upon their innocence, attempt to justify themselves legally, in contempt of his authority. I observe also another fault in him, which is common with people of quality; notwithstanding he loves his domestics, he pays no regard to their services; he suffers them to grow old, without thinking of procuring them a settlement: and if they do meet with rewards, they often are indebted to their friends, who put him in mind of it, otherwise he would not think of providing for them.

The old valet de chambre informed me of this concerning his master's character. Afterwards he told me his opinion of the clergy whom we dined with. The description he gave me of them was very different from their appearance. He did not paint them as dishonest, but only as pitiful priests; some however he excepted, whose virtues he praised very much. I was not any longer at a loss how to behave, and that very night at supper, I imitated them, by putting on a grave countenance, at no expence. One need not be surpris'd that there are such vast numbers of hypocrites.



C H A P. III.

Gil Blas becomes the Archbishop's Favourite, and the Person by whose Means his Favours are granted.

IN the afternoon I had been to bring my horse and my baggage from the inn where I lodged, and returned to the palace to supper, where I had a genteel chamber, and a down-bed ready for me. The archbishop ordered me to be called early next morning, to transcribe a homily, which he desired me to do very

exactly. I did it to his wishes, not omitting either accent, stop, or comma. The joy he expressed was mixed with surprize; Good God! he exclaimed in a transport, when he surveyed the copy, was any thing ever more correct? You transcribe so well, you must be a grammarian. Tell me freely, was there nothing in my writings that shocked you? was there no improper term, nor negligence in the style? O, my lord, said I with a modest air, I have not learning sufficient to make critical observations, and if I had, I dare say your Grace's works would escape my censure. The prelate smiled at my reply; but through all his piety, I could see he was not an author for nothing.

I entirely gained his good graces by flattery, and every day grew more and more in his favour; and I was informed by Don Fernando, who came frequently to see him, that his regard for me was so great, that I might look upon my fortune as already made. My master himself confirmed me in this; one night, in his own closet, he in a rapture repeated a homily, which he was to speak in public next day, and not satisfied with asking my opinion of it in general, he insisted upon my pointing out the passages I most admired. I was so lucky as to pitch upon those he most approved of himself, which made him imagine I had a delicate taste of the true beauties of a work. This, exclaimed he, is taste and sentiment. Go, friend, I find you have not Midas's ears. He was so well pleased with me, that he said with a lively air, Gil Blas, you may be quite easy about your fortune, for the future it shall be perfectly agreeable to you. I will convince you of my respect, by the confidence I will repose in you.

As soon as his Grace had expressed himself in this manner, I fell at his feet, quite overcome with gratitude; I embraced his bandy-legs sincerely, looking up-

on myself now in a fair way to be rich. Yes, my child, continued his Grace, whose conversation was interrupted by my acknowledgments, thou shalt know my most secret thoughts; hear attentively what I am going to say. Preaching is my chief delight, and the Lord blesses my homilies; they affect sinners, and induce them to reflect seriously on their conduct, and return to their duty. I have the pleasure of seeing the miser, afraid of the representations I draw of his covetousness, open his treasures, and distribute them lavishly; I have drove the voluptuous man from his pleasures, and filled hermitages with proud men; I have also brought back to her duty a wife who was staggered by a seducing lover. These frequent conversions should be a sufficient inducement for me to continue my labours; yet I will own my weakness to you; there is another reward which I propose myself, a reward which the delicacy of my virtue in vain reproaches me with; this is the applause given by the world to fine polished writings. The honour of being esteemed a perfect orator delights my imagination. My writings are thought both delicate and expressive, and I would gladly go off the stage with my character unsullied, and avoid the fault of those good authors who write too long. Therefore, my dear Gil Blas, continued the prelate, I must require one thing of your zeal; whenever you see my genius flag, and my pen discover my old age, do not fail to acquaint me with it, for I cannot rely on my own judgment. Too good an opinion of myself might deceive me; a disinterested judgment must make this observation; I chuse yours, which I believe is good; it depend on your decision. I replied, My Lord, thank God, that time is at a great distance, and a genius like that of your Grace's will preserve its strength much longer than any other; or, to speak more plainly, will al-

ways be the same. I look upon you like another cardinal Ximenes, whose superior genius recovered new strength as he advanced in age. He interrupted me, crying, No flattery, my friend, I am sensible that I may sink all at once. It is at my age that people begin to feel infirmities, and the understanding is often affected by the infirmities of the body. I desire once more, Gil Blas, that whenever you perceive my senses decline, you may apprize me of it; do not fear that your sincerity will offend, I shall receive this advice as a mark of thy esteem for me. Your own interest is also concerned; for if I hear that the public say my discourses have not their usual effect, and that I should now repose myself, I assure you that you would forfeit my friendship, and the fortune I promised you; this would be the effects of your ill-timed reserve.

Here my patron gave over speaking, to hear what answer I gave, which was a promise to do what he required of me: and from this time I became his favourite and confident; which filled all the domestics, except Melchior de la Ronda, with envy. It was very entertaining to see the behaviour of the gentlemen and masters of the horse to his Grace's confident; they would even submit to the meanest things to get into my favour; I could scarcely believe them to be Spaniards. Yet I did all I could to oblige them, without being a dupe to their selfish complaisance. At my request, his Grace the archbishop used his interest for them; he procured a company for one, and put him in a situation to make a figure in the army; to another, he procured a considerable post in Mexico; and I obtained a handsome gratuity for my friend Melchior. I perceived by this condescension of the prelate, that he seldom refused any favours asked of him.

But I think what I did for a certain priest deserves

to be mentioned. One day our steward presented to me a certain licentiate, called Lewis Garcias, a young man of a very genteel appearance. Signior Gil Blas, said he, this honest clergyman is a good friend of mine; he was chaplain in a nunnery, where his conduct has not escaped censure. In short, some malicious people have hurt him in his Grace's good opinion, and he is suspended; unfortunately his Grace is so much prejudiced against him, that he will not hearken to any solicitation that is made in his behalf. All the persons of rank in Grenada have been employed to beg he may be re-established, but it has had no effect upon our master.

You have gone the wrong way to work, gentlemen, said I; if there had been no solicitations made for Mr. Licentiate, it might have been better for him; I know his Grace's disposition; recommendations and intreaties serve only to aggravate the fault of an ecclesiastic in his opinion. Very lately I overheard him say, the more interest that is made for a priest, who has been guilty of irregularity, the more it augments his scandal, and induces me to use the more severity towards him.

The steward replied, That is very unlucky, and my friend would be greatly at a loss, were he not blessed with good hands; he writes admirably well, and by that keeps himself out of difficulties. I was desirous to see if this writing, so greatly commended, exceeded my own very much, and accordingly the licentiate, who had a specimen of it in his pocket, shewed it to me, and I admired it greatly; it seemed a copy of a great master. While I was looking at this handsome performance, something came into my head; I told Garcias to leave the specimen with me, and probably I might make some use of it, which might turn to his advantage; that at that time I could not explain myself, but

would say more to him next day about it. The licentiate, to whom likely the steward commended my genius, seemed as well satisfied as if he really had been reinstated in his office. I sincerely wished he was; and that very day did all I could for him, in the following manner.

Being with the archbishop alone, I shewed Garcias's writing to him; he seemed quite delighted with it: then embracing the opportunity, I said to him, As you will not have your homilies printed, I wish you would have them wrote in this hand. I am content, with thine, replied the prelate; but I confess I should not dislike to have a copy of my works in that hand. I answered, your Grace needs only to speak to the person who writes so well, he is a licentiate of my acquaintance, who will be delighted to have it in his power to serve you in this manner, as he may by these means prevail upon your goodness to relieve him from the disagreeable situation he is so unfortunate as to be in at present.

The prelate enquired what was the name of the licentiate; I replied, his name is Lewis Garcias; and his grief for having incurred your displeasure has made him almost resolute. This Garcias, said he, if I mistake not, was chaplain to a nunnery, and is under the censure of the church; I remember some informations made against him; his morals are not good. Sir, said I, interrupting him, I will not offer to justify him; but I am sensible that he has enemies; and he tells me that those people who informed you, had a greater desire to do him an injury than to represent the truth. That is very possible, said the prelate, there are some very malicious people in the world: and allowing his conduct has been none of the best, he probably may

have repented of his misbehaviour; but, in short, there is mercy for all offences: bring the licentiate here, I take off his suspension.

Thus, when self-interest is in the case, the most severe people will be softened: the archbishop readily granted, for the vanity of having his works well written, what he had refused to the solicitations of men of the first rank. I immediately carried the news to the steward, who informed his friend Gracias of it. The next day the licentiate came to thank me proportionably to the favour I had obtained him. I carried him before my master, who only slightly reprimanded him, and gave him the homilies to write over fair. Garcias acquitted himself so well, that he was re-established in his ministry, and obtained the living of Gabia, a large market-town at no great distance from Grenada.



CH A P. IV.

The Archbishop takes an Apoplectic Fit. The Dilemma Gil Blas is in, and how he extricates himself.

WHILE I was thus dispensing my favours to different people, Don Fernando was preparing to leave Grenada. I went to pay him a visit before his departure, to give him thanks for the good post he had got me. He saw me appear so well satisfied, that he thus expressed himself: My dear Gil Blas, I am delighted to find you so well pleased with my uncle the archbishop. I replied, indeed I am charmed with him; he discovers so much goodness towards me, that I cannot be too grateful for it. Nothing else could have comforted me for the loss of Don Caesar and his son.

I dare say, answered he, that they also are uneasy at being separated from you: but it may not be an everlasting separation; fortune may one day bring you together again. These words affected me greatly; I sighed, and at that instant found so strong an affection for Don Alphonso, that I could readily have left the bishop, and all my agreeable prospects, to return to the castle of Leyva, if the obstacle which drove me from it had been removed. Don Fernando saw me moved, and it gave him so much pleasure, that he embraced me most affectionately, and assured me that his whole family would always be concerned for my welfare.

Two months after the departure of this gentleman, while I was in the height of my favour, there was a great alarm at the archi-episcopal palace: his Grace was seized with an apoplectic fit. However, he had immediate assistance; such sovereign remedies were applied, that his health was re-established in a few days. But his judgment had received a terrible shock, which appeared very plain in the next discourse he composed. However, I was not so sensible of the difference, as to imagine that the orator began to droop; and waited for another homily before I declared my sentiments, which indeed discovered it very plainly. The good old prelate sometimes repeated the same things over and over, and at others he rose too high, or sunk too low. It was a long winded discourse, the rhetoric of an old school-master.

I was not the only person who observed this; most part of the audience, as if they had been retained on purpose to examine it, spoke to each other in a low voice, This discourse smells much of the apoplexy. Upon which I said to myself, Come, Mr. Arbiter of the homilies, prepare to do your office; you see his Grace flags; it is your duty to apprise him of it, not only on

account of your being his confident, but also lest some of his friends should prevent you, by being so free as to inform him of it; in which case you know what would be your fate; you would be struck out of his will, in which undoubtedly there is a better legacy provided for you, than the Licentiate Sedillo's library.

I then made other reflections of a very different nature. To give the notice in question, appeared to me a very nice point; I supposed that it might not be well received by an author like him, who had so great an opinion of his own works; but laying aside that thought, I imagined it impossible he should take it ill, after having pressed me to do so: and I expected that I could mention it with address, and could gild the pill so as he should swallow it without reluctance. In short, finding that by being silent I was in more hazard than by speaking, I determined to tell him my thoughts.

Now the only thing which perplexed me was how to bring it off to him: but very luckily the orator himself assisted me in this, by enquiring what people said of his last sermon, whether they were satisfied with it. I replied, that his homilies had always been admired, but the last did not meet with the same approbation as his former ones; the hearers were not so much affected by it. How, friend, answered he surprised, was there an * Aristarchus present? No, my Lord, answered I; such works as yours are not to be criticised; they delight every body. However, as you charged me to be free and sincere, I will make so bold as to tell you, that your last discourse, in my opinion, had not the same energy as your former ones. Do you not think the same?

At these words my master turned pale, and with a

* A great critic.

forced smile answered, So, Mr. Gil Blas, I find this piece is not to your taste then? I do not say that, answered I, interrupting him quite in confusion: I think it very fine, though inferior to the former ones. I understand you, replied he, do not you think I droop? be free with me. You believe it is time for me to retire. I replied, I would not have been so forward as to tell you my mind so freely, had your Grace not commanded me. I only do it in compliance with your desire, and I humbly beg that your Grace will not take my freedom ill. God forbid, replied he hastily, that I should reproach you with it; it would be very unjust if I did. I do not take it amiss that you speak your sentiments, but I find them erroneous. I have been greatly deceived in your weak understanding.

I was greatly disconcerted, and I endeavoured to set matters right again; but how can one calm an enraged author, who is accustomed to praises? Say no more, friend, cried he, you are too raw to see things in a proper light. I assure you, I never composed a better homily than that which you disapprove of. Thank God, my genius is as vigorous as ever: and for the future I will make a better choice of a confidant; I will have an abler judge. Go, said he, turning me out of the closet, tell my treasurer that I order you a hundred ducats; and with that sum may heaven direct you. Farewell, Mr. Gil Blas, I wish you a better taste, and all manner of prosperity.



C H A P. V.

The Step Gil Blas took after he was dismissed by the Archbishop. He accidentally meets with the Licentiate whom he had obliged. The Proof that Priest gave him of his Gratitude.

I WENT from the closet, cursing the archbishop's weakness; my rage against him was greater than my vexation for the loss of my fortune. I was even doubtful whether I should receive the hundred ducats; but after some deliberation, I was not so simple as to refuse them. I reflected that this money would not deprive me of the right of ridiculing the prelate, which I was determined to do, whenever his homilies were spoken of in my company.

I therefore demanded the hundred ducats from the treasurer, without telling him what had happened between the archbishop and me; and then went in search of Melchior de la Ronda, to take my last farewell of him. His regard for me was so strong, that he felt for my misfortune. I saw grief in his countenance while I related the story. He could not refrain from blaming the archbishop, notwithstanding the respect he owed him. I swore in my anger, that the prelate should pay for it, for that I would amuse the whole town at his expence. The sensible Melchior said, Gil Blas, I beg you will take my advice; rather stifle your resentment; people of an inferior rank ought always to behave respectfully to people of quality, notwithstanding they may have reason to complain. I confess that there are some very weak noblemen, who do not deserve re-

spect; but they are to be feared, as they have it in their power to hurt us.

I returned the old valet de chambre thanks for his good advice, and promised to observe it. If you go to Madrid, said he, pay my nephew Joseph Navarro a visit. He is clerk of the kitchen to Don Balthazar de Zuniga, and I assure you he is a young man worthy of your esteem. He is brisk, free, obliging, and ready to serve his friends; I wish you and he may be acquainted. I told him I would not neglect to wait upon his friend Joseph, as soon as I arrived at Madrid, where I was determined to go. Then I left the archbishop's palace, with an intention never to return again. If I had kept my horse, I would probably have set out immediately for Toledo; but I had disposed of him while I was in favour, expecting I should have no further occasion for him. I took a room ready furnished, determining to remain at Grenada a month, and then repair to the Count de Polan.

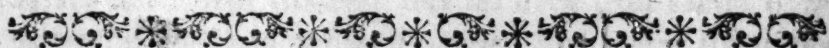
As dinner-time was advancing, I enquired of my landlady if there was an eating-house near; she told me there was an exceeding good one at no great distance, which was frequented by very good company, and people were extremely well served there. I desired her to shew me the place, and went directly there, where I was introduced into a large hall, resembling a refectory, where ten or a dozen men were placed at a large table, covered with a dirty cloth, conversing with each other while they were at meals. Mine was brought, which at another time would have made me regret the loss of the archbishop's table; but then I was so much nettled, that I preferred the small allowance of the eating-house to the prelate's good cheer. I condemned the number of dishes which were at each meal, and, like the doctor of Valladolid, secretly exclaimed, Un-

happy are those who frequent such pernicious tables, where one must constantly be upon one's guard, for fear of overloading his stomach: one cannot eat too little. I went on, in my bad humour, praising the very maxims I had so much neglected.

While I was dispatching my commons, not afraid of exceeding the bounds of temperance, who should come into the hall but the Licentiate Lewis Garcias, then vicar of Gabia. The moment he saw me, he ran eagerly to salute me, with all the signs of joy. He clasped me in his arms, and I was obliged to endure a long compliment upon the service I had been of to him. His too great gratitude quite fatigued me, and placing himself by me, Egad! my good patron, as I have been so fortunate as to meet with you, we will not part without taking a chearful glass together. But as there is no good wine to be had here, I will carry you to a place where we can have a bottle of fine dry Lucena, and a little good muscadine of Foncarrel. We must have a debauch. Can I not have the happiness of your company for a few days at my house at Gabia, where you shall be received like a generous Mecænas, to whom I am indebted for the calm and pleasant life I lead there?

While he was talking to me in this manner, they brought him his allowance, which he began to eat very heartily, every now and then saying something pleasing to me; and I in my turn took this opportunity to talk to him; and as he did not neglect inquiring after his friend the steward, I acquainted him with my having left the archbishop's service. I even told him every circumstance of my disgrace, which he listened to with the greatest attention. I expected to have seen him overwhelmed with sorrow, after the friendship he had expressed, and to have heard him exclaim against the archbishop; but that appeared distant from his thoughts;

he grew cold and thoughtful, and did not say one syllable more while he was at dinner, but rising quickly from the table, saluted me coolly, and walked of. The ungrateful wretch perceiving I was not now in a situation to serve him, would not even be at the trouble of concealing his sentiments. I only contemptuously smiled at his ingratitude, and called aloud to him, Hol-la, you discreet chaplain of the nuns, go and cool that delicious Lucena wine you invited me to.



CHAP. VI.

Gil Blas goes to see a Play at Grenada, and is surprised at the Sight of one of the Actresses; the Consequences of it.

NO sooner was Garcias gone out of the hall, than there came in two well-dressed cavaliers; they sat down by me, and began to talk of the company of players, and a new comedy that was then acted. By their conversation, I found this piece had made a great noise in town, which raised a desire in me to go and see it that very night, as I had not seen a play all the time I was at Grenada; being most of the time at the archbishop's, where this diversion was excluded, I deprived myself of that pleasure. My master's homilies had been my only entertainment.

At the proper time I went to the play-house, where I found a numerous audience, most of whom were busy making remarks upon the play before it began, and every body pretended to criticise upon it: one person declared himself for the performance, another against it; one person upon my right hand exclaims, Did you e-

ver see a piece better written? One on my left hand cries, What a pitiful style it is! Really if there are many bad authors, it must be owned there are still more wretched critics. And when I consider the hardships dramatic poets lie under, I am amazed any of them has the courage to brave the ignorance of the multitude, and the dangerous censure of witlings, who often corrupt the judgment of the public.

The Gracioso at length presented himself to open the scene, and they saluted him with a general clap, which informed me that he was one of those spoiled actors, in whom the pit pardons every thing. In short, this player did not utter a word, nor perform a gesture, without applause. The audience let him perceive too plainly the pleasure they took in seeing him perform, and accordingly he abused their favour. I observed that he sometimes forgot himself upon the stage, and put their prepossession in his behalf to too severe a proof. If they had hissed him sometimes, instead of clapping him, they would have done more justice to him.

They also applauded some other actors, and particularly an actress, who played the part of a servant. I looked at her attentively; but how can I express my surprize, when I discovered her to be Laura, my dear Laura, who I expected was still at Madrid with Arsenia. There was not the smallest room to doubt that it was she. Her features, shape, and tone of voice, assured me that I was not mistaken. However, I enquired her name from a cavalier who sat near me, as if I had mistrusted my eyes and ears. Ha! said he, not know the fair Estella? Where do you come from? You must be newly arrived.

Her disguise could not deceive me; the resemblance was too great for me to be mistaken. I could easily comprehend, that when Laura changed her situation,

she would also change her name: and being desirous to know her present situation, as the public are generally pretty well acquainted with the affairs of persons of that sphere, I enquired of the same person, if this Estella had any lover of consequence? he answered, that a great Portuguese nobleman, named the Marquis de Marialva, who was at Grenada, had, for these two months, spent plenty of money on her account. He would have said a great deal more, but I was afraid of asking him too many questions. The intelligence this cavalier had given me, took up my attention more than the comedy; and if any body had asked me the subject of the play when I came out, I should have been greatly at a loss for an answer. I could do nothing but muse upon Laura and Estella, and determined to pay her a visit next day. But I could not help being very anxious about the reception I should meet with, as I suspected my presence would not be very agreeable in her present flourishing situation: I even supposed that so good an actress, out of revenge for my having disoblged her, would disclaim any acquaintance with me. This however did not prevent me from putting my design into execution; so after an indifferent supper (for my eating-house afforded no other), I went home to my lodging, and patiently wished for next morning.

That night I slept very little, and rose at day-break. But as I supposed a nobleman's mistress would not be up so early, I spent three or four hours in dressing, shaving, powdering, and perfuming, resolving to appear before her dressed so as not to give her reason to be ashamed of such an acquaintance. About ten o'clock I went to her lodging, to which I got a direction at the play-house. She had the first floor of a large house. A chamber-maid came to the door, and I told her I wanted to speak with Estella. I heard

the girl deliver the message, and Estella replied in a loud voice, What does the young man want? Who is he? Shew him in. By her manner of speaking, I concluded that I had chosen an improper time to pay my visit; that her Portuguese lover was at her toilet; and her reason for speaking so loud, was to convince him that she was not accustomed to receive suspected messages. My conjectures were very right, the Marquis de Mari-alva generally spent the morning in her company. I expected a rough compliment, but was greatly disappointed. This original of an actress, immediately on seeing me, received me with open arms, saying, Ah! is it you, my dear brother? embracing me again and again: and turning to her lover, My Lord, said she, forgive me for yielding to the force of nature in your presence: I cannot, after three years separation, see a brother whom I tenderly love, without giving him some proofs of my regard. Well, my dear Gil Blas, continued she, again addressing herself to me, give me some account of our family, what situation have you left them in?

At first this conversation embarrassed me, but I very soon discovered Laura's intention, and, with an air suitable to the farce we were about to act, I answered, Thank God, sister, our parents are very well. I make no doubt, replied she, but you are surprised to see me an actress at Grenada; but do not blame me till you know the reason. You remember it is three years since my father expected he had settled me advantageously, by giving me to Captain Don Antonio Coelo in marriage, who carried me from Asturia to Madrid, the place of his nativity. Six months after our arrival at that city, having an affair of honour brought upon him by his violent temper, he killed a cavalier (who had taken it into his head to pay me some attention) in a

duel. This gentleman being related to some persons of quality and credit, obliged my husband to make his escape into Catalonia, with all the ready money and jewels we had in our possession. He embarked at Barcelona, went into Italy, engaged in the Venetian service, and at last lost his life in the Morea, fighting against the Turks. In the mean time an estate, and the only one we had to rely on, was confiscated, and I became a poor widow. In such extremity, what could I do? I could not return into Asturia; besides, what could I do there? I could only receive condolences from my family. Nor would I embrace a life of libertinism; my education was too good for that. What then should I do? in short, to preserve my reputation, I turned actresses.

I could hardly refrain from laughing while Laura was talking in this manner; however, I conquered myself, and answered in a grave tone, Sister, I approve of your conduct, and am very glad to see you so well settled here.

The Marquis was all attention when she spoke, and believed every syllable she said; he even joined in the conversation, and enquired whether I had any employment at Grenada or elsewhere. I was at a loss what answer to make, whether I should tell a lye; but, on reflexion, not thinking that needful, I spoke the truth, telling him every circumstance, how I was hired at the archbishop's, and why I was dismissed. My story afforded the nobleman much diversion; and indeed, I did rally a little at the expence of the archbishop, notwithstanding my promise to Melchior. But what was the most entertaining part, Laura imagined that I had invented this story, in imitation of her, and took loud fits of laughing, which she would not have done, had she known that I was not dissembling.

When I had ended my story, word was brought that dinner was ready at my eating house, where I would have immediately withdrawn, but was prevented by Laura, who said, Brother, you shall dine here; and I will not allow you to stay any longer at your lodging. Order your baggage to my house; you shall both eat and sleep here; I have a spare bed at your service.

Upon this the Portuguese nobleman, who probably was not well pleased with this hospitality, addressing himself to Laura, No, Estella, you have not convenience for your brother in these lodgings. He appears to be a pretty young fellow, and his being dear to you, interests me in his favour. I will take him as my favourite secretary and confidant; let him come to my house this night. I will order an apartment to be prepared for him, and give him a salary of four hundred ducats a-year: and if I have reason to be pleased with his behaviour (as I hope I shall) I will put him into such a situation, that he will not be sorry for having left the archbishop.

The acknowledgments I made upon this occasion, were joined by those of Laura, which were still more expressive. Not a word more about it, interrupted he, it is done. Then he saluted his theatrical princess, and took his leave. She went with me into a closet, and finding herself alone with me, I should burst, cried she, if I refrained from laughing any longer. Then seating herself in an easy chair, and holding her sides, she laughed to such a degree, that it might have been supposed she had lost her senses. It was impossible for me to refrain, I followed her example; and when we had sufficiently indulged ourselves, Gil Blas, said she, own that we have acted a pleasant farce; but I did not expect it would end in this manner. I only intended to provide you with a table and lodging in my house; and

it was that I might offer them with propriety, that made me own you for my brother. However, it gives me great pleasure that fortune has preferred you to a good post. The Marquis de Marialva has a very generous disposition, and probably will do more for you than he has promised; and perhaps no other person but myself would have received so graciously a person who leaves his friends without taking leave of them: but I am one of those good-tempered creatures, who cannot help receiving with pleasure a rogue I once respected.

I freely owned that I had behaved ill, and asked her pardon; then conducting me into an elegant dining-room, we sat down to table, and behaved to each other as brother and sister, as a chambermaid and footman were attending. Having finished dinner, we retired again to the closet, where we amused each other as before. There my incomparable Laura giving loose to her natural gaiety, desired to have an account of all my adventures since we had seen each other. I gave her a true account of the whole; and after I had satisfied her curiosity, she complied with my request, in giving me an account of herself, as follows.



CHAP. VII.

The Story of Laura.

I WILL relate as minutely as possible how I accidentally embraced the profession of an actress. After you had left me so genteelly, several remarkable things happened. Arsenia my mistress, being tired with the world, rather than disgusted at it, renounced the stage, and retired to a fine estate she had bought near Zamo-

ra, with the price of her favours, where she took me with her. We very soon contracted an acquaintance in that city, where we went frequently and spent a day or two, and then returned to our castle, and shut ourselves up.

In one of these little excursions, Don Felix Maldonado, an only son to the corregidor of Zamora, saw me accidentally, and I was so fortunate as to please him. He endeavoured to get an opportunity of speaking to me alone, and to be free with you, I endeavoured to find one. He was a cavalier about twenty years of age, fair as Love himself, perfectly well shaped, and still more pleasing in his gallant and generous behaviour than in his person. He had a large brilliant upon his finger, which he made me an offer of with so good a grace, and so importunately, that I could by no means avoid accepting of it. I could not but be indifferent about so amiable a gallant; but it is very imprudent in girls in my situation to attach themselves to heirs of people of quality. The corregidor his father was very severe, and being informed of our correspondence, made haste to prevent the consequences; and had me apprehended by a company of alguazils, who carried me to the hospital de la Pitié, in spite of my tears; where, without any other form of process, the superior ordered my cloaths and ring to be taken off, and put on me a long gown of grey cloth, which was bound about me with a strap of black leather, from whence a rosary of large beads hung down to my feet. Then they conducted me into a hall, where there was an old monk, of what order I know not, who began to preach penitence to me, much in the same way as Dame Leonarda exhorted you to patience in the cave. He told me that those who had ordered me to be confined were my friends, and I was much obliged to them for drawing me out of the snares

of the devil. I freely own I was ungrateful, for I loaded them with imprecations, instead of thanks.

I passed eight days in the greatest affliction, but on the ninth, for I counted every moment, my fate appeared inclinable to change. In crossing a small court, I met the steward of the house, a person to whom all were under subjection; even the superior was obliged to submit, and he rendered an account of his stewardship to the corregidor only, as he depended on no other person, and the corregidor reposed all his confidence in him. He was called Pedro Zendono, and was born at Sellesdon in Biscay. He was a tall, thin, pale man; his figure would have been a good pattern for the picture of the good thief: he scarce seemed to take any notice of the sisters; and though you have lived in the archbishop's palace, you never saw such an hypocritical face.

This Signior Zendono stopped me, saying, Daughter, your misfortunes have touched me, be comforted. He went on without saying any more, and left me to make what comments I pleased upon so laconic a text. As I had a good opinion of him, I innocently imagined that he had taken some trouble to enquire into the reason of my confinement, and finding me not so guilty as to deserve such hard treatment, he intended to do me some service with the corregidor. But I was quite mistaken with regard to his intentions; they were very different: he imparted them to me a few days after, and intending to take a journey, My dear Laura, said he, your sufferings affect me greatly, and I am determined to put an end to them. I know I shall ruin myself by it, but I am no longer master of myself. I will take you from prison to-morrow, and conduct you to Madrid, as I am resolved to sacrifice every thing to the pleasure of being your deliverer.

At these words I was ready to faint with joy; from my being so thankful, he imagined I wished for nothing so much as my liberty, and he was so bold as to carry me off next day in open day-light, in the following manner. He informed the superior, that he had the corregidor's orders to carry me to him at his pleasure-house, two leagues from town, and made me boldly get into the chaise with him, drawn by two good mules, which he had purchased on that occasion, and had no other attendants but a servant, who drove the chaise, and who was entirely devoted to the steward. We did not set out for Madrid, as I expected, but towards the frontiers of Portugal, where we arrived before the corregidor of Zamora could be informed of our flight, and send his beagles of justice after us.

The Biscayner made me dress myself in a suit of men's cloaths before we entered Braganza, which he had brought for that purpose; and looking upon me as fairly engaged with him, as soon as we arrived at the inn, he addressed me thus: Fair Laura, be not disobliged at me for bringing you into Portugal, for in our native country the corregidor of Zamora would have pursued us as two criminals, to whom Spain ought not to give refuge: but, added he, in this foreign country we may shelter ourselves; although it be at present under the dominion of the Spanish monarchy, we shall at least be in more safety here, than at home; therefore follow a man who adores you. We will settle at Coimbra, where I will become a spy for the holy office: and under covert of that formidable tribunal, we will live in ease and pleasure.

A proposal of this kind made me understand that I had a cavalier to deal with, who would not redress the grievances of damsels for the glory of knight-errantry alone. I found that he depended very much upon my

gratitude, and still more upon my distress. Notwithstanding both these considerations were in his favour, I disdainfully rejected his proposal. Indeed, I had two very good reasons for receiving his offers with reserve; his person was very disagreeable, and I was doubtful concerning his circumstances: but upon his making an offer of marriage, and shewing me that his stewardship had enriched him greatly, I confess that I began to hearken to his addresses. The gold and jewels which he displayed before me dazzled me; and I found by experience, that interest makes as many metamorphoses as love. My Biscayner gradually became quite another person in my eyes; I thought his tall withered body a very fine shape, and his pale complexion appeared agreeably fair; and I even had a favourable opinion of his hypocritical looks. I then freely accepted his hand, in the face of Heaven, which he called to witness his engagement. We then proceeded on our journey, he no longer having any contradiction from me; and Coimbra soon received a new family within its gates.

My husband purchased some genteel cloaths, and several diamonds for me, amongst which I knew again that which belonged to Don Felix Maldonado. This gave me sufficient reason to guess how he had come by these diamonds; it let me see that I had not married a rigid observer of the seventh article of the decalogue. But looking upon myself as the first cause of his dexterity, I overlooked it. A woman will excuse bad actions, which are occasioned by her beauty. Had that not been the case, I would have detested him.

For two or three months I was very well pleased with him; he appeared to love me tenderly, and always behaved gallantly: yet the marks of his affection were but false appearances; for the villain tricked me at last.

I returned from mass one morning, and found an empty house; all the goods, and even my cloaths, were carried off. Zendono and his faithful attendant had managed affairs so well, that in less than an hour the house was entirely stripped. Here I found myself abandoned, like another Ariadne, by an ungrateful fellow, with only the cloaths on my back, and Don Felix's ring on my finger. But I did not entertain myself with making elegies on my misfortune; I rather was thankful to God, for delivering me from such a wretch, who must come to justice one time or other. I reckoned all the time we had been together as lost, which I should soon recover again. There were several women of quality in Portugal who would have taken me, if I would have staid there; but whether it was the love of my country, or whether I was drawn by the influence of my stars, which were preparing a better destiny for me, I had a strong inclination to return into Spain, which I determined to do, and applied to a jeweller, who gave me cash for my ring; and I set out in a chaise with an old Spanish lady who was going to Seville.

Dorothea was the name of the lady; she had been at Coimbra on a visit to a relation who was settled there, and was now on her return to Seville, where she lived. There was such a sympathy between us, that we became very well acquainted with each other on the first day of our journey; and our friendship increased so much on the way, that on our arrival at Seville, she insisted I should lodge no where but at her house. I had no reason to repent of my acquaintance; she was a woman of exceeding good character. One might still see by her features, and lively eyes, that she had occasioned many serenades. She was the widow of several noble

husbands, and now lived honourably upon the jointures she enjoyed.

She had among many other excellent qualities, that of being compassionate to the misfortunes of young women. When I related my story to her, she heartily espoused my interests, and poured out a thousand curses upon Zendonó. What rogues the men are! said she in a tone of voice, which made me imagine she had in her time met with a steward of a nunnery. There are in the world such a set of wretched villains, who entertain themselves at the expence of ruining women. But what gives me pleasure, my dear child, added she, is, that you are nowise tied to the perjured Biscayner. If your marriage with him was good enough to secure your reputation, by way of reward, it is also bad enough to allow you to contract a better when you have an opportunity.

Every day I went with Dorothea either to church or somewhere else, which was the way soon to meet with some adventure. I attracted the eyes of several cavaliers, some of whom, who were willing to sound me, made interest with my old landlady; but some were not able to make a genteel settlement, and others were still minors, so that I had little encouragement to hearken to any of them.

One day Dorothea and I took a fancy to go to a play at Seville, and upon reading the bill, saw they intended to act *La Famosa Comedia, El Embaxodor de Si-mismo*, composed by Lopez de Vega Carpio.

I discovered among the actresses who appeared on the stage my old friend Phenice, that chearful girl, whom thou hast seen when she was waiting-maid to Florimonda, and with whom you have sometimes supped at Arsenia's house. I knew that she had been from Madrid two years, but did not imagine that she had

become actresses. As I was very impatient to embrace her, I thought the play very tedious, but this might be occasioned by the comedy being done either too well or too ill to divert me; for as I am very chearful, I can be as much diverted at a ridiculous player as a very good one.

At last the wished-for moment came, the *Famosa Comedia* was ended; my widow and I went behind the scenes, where we saw Phenice acting the coquette, and affectionately listening to the soft warbling of a young spark, who had allowed himself to be enchanted with the charms of her utterance. As soon as she perceived me, she left her admirer with a gracious smile, and ran to me with open arms, loading me with caresses. We mutually expressed our joy at seeing each other; but the time and place not allowing us to have a long conversation, we refrained from any more till next day, that we met at her lodging.

One of the most eager passions in womankind is that of talking. I could not sleep the whole night, so much did I long to talk with Phenice, and teaze her with questions. Heaven knows that I was not backward in rising, and going to her lodgings, according as she directed me. She lived with the whole company in a large house ready furnished. When I went in, I met a servant, whom I desired to shew me to Phenice's apartment. She conducted me up to a gallery, on one side of which were ten or twelve chambers, only divided from each other by partitions of deal boards, which were all inhabited by the jolly crew. My conductor knocked at a door, which was immediately opened by Phenice, who longed to talk as much as I. We hardly took time to seat ourselves, so keen were we of chatting. And now we were in a fair way of having enough of it; for we had an immense number of ques-

tions and answers, which succeeded each other very quickly.

After having mutually recounted our adventures, and informed each other of the state of our affairs, Phenice enquired what I was resolved to do. I told her, that I intended to enter into the service of some young lady of quality, till something better offered: Fie, said my friend, you jest sure; you must certainly be tired of servitude, and of humouring the caprices of others; in short, it is being a perfect slave. Why wilt thou not follow my example, and embrace a theatrical life? no employment is more proper for persons of wit, who have no fortune. It is a middling situation between the nobility and commonality, an unrestricted condition, free of that decorum which is troublesome to society. The publick pay our revenues in ready cash, which we spend as we get it, and live merrily.

The play-house is particularly favourable to women; I blush to recollect, that while I lived with Florimonda, I was reduced to the necessity of listening to the candle-snuffers of the prince's company; no person of fashion paid the least attention to my person or face. The reason of this was, that I was not seen. If the finest picture is in a bad light, it does not strike; but since I have been upon the stage, heavens, what a change! I see at my feet young men of the best figure in all the cities we pass through, which makes the profession of an actress very agreeable. If she behaves prudently, and favours but one man at a time, she has great credit, and her chastity is applauded; when she changes her lover, she passes for a real widow, who marries a second husband: and again, if she marries a third time, she is despised, and it is said that she infringes the delicacy of her sex; whereas an actress seems to be more respected, in proportion to the number of

her admirers, and is a morsel for a lord, after she has gone through an hundred intrigues.

Who are you telling this to? said I interrupting her. Do you imagine that I am ignorant of those advantages? I have frequently reflected on them, and find them but too pleasing to a girl of my character; I even feel an inclination for the stage; but an inclination alone is not sufficient: one must also have a talent, and this I am not possessed of: for when I have attempted to repeat passages of plays before Arsenia, she was not at all pleased with my performance, which disgusted me with the profession. You are very soon discouraged, answered Phenice; are you not sensible that great actresses are generally jealous? In spite of all their vanity, they are afraid of being eclipsed. In short, I will not be determined by Arsenia, she has not been sincere. I assure you sincerely, that you are born for the stage; you are possessed of a genius, a fine graceful action, soft voice, fine chest, and such a face! Ah, rogue! how many cavaliers wilt thou charm, if thou turnest actress!

She said many very engaging things, and induced me to repeat some verses, that I myself might judge of my talent for comedy. When she heard me, the case was wonderfully altered; she commended me greatly, and preferred me to all the actresses in Madrid. After this, I could no longer doubt of my merit; Arsenia stood impeached and convicted of insincerity and envy, and I could not help thinking that I was an admirable player. Two actors coming in at that instant, Phenice made me repeat the verses over again before them; they were struck with ecstasy, from which they no sooner recovered, than they loaded me with compliments. In good earnest, had the three laid a wager which should extol me most, they could not have spoken more extra-

vagantly. My modesty was not proof against such praises, and I began to think myself of so much value, that I determined to go upon the stage.

Come then, my dear Phenice, said I, the affair is settled, I will follow your advice, and enter into the company, if they think well of it. My friend was transported with joy at these words, and embraced me; and her two comrades did not appear less pleased to discover these sentiments. It was agreed that I should repair to the play-house next morning, and give the company the same specimen of my talents that I had shewn them. If I had gained the good opinion of those who were at Phenice's lodgings, all the actors judged still more favourably of me, when they heard me pronounce about twenty verses; and very willingly received me into their company; and then my first appearance engrossed my thoughts. I was willing to make it as gay as possible, for which purpose I applied all the money which remained of the ring; and though I could not make a sumptuous appearance, I supplied that want by a good taste in dress.

At length I made my first appearance upon the stage, and met with great applause. What praises, what encomiums did I meet with! It is modesty to say plainly that I ravished the audience. One must have been witness of the noise I made at Seville, to believe it. I entertained the whole city, who came in crowds to the play-house, and the company regained the public (who were begun to forsake them) on my account.

I then began in a manner that delighted all the company; which answered the same purpose as if I had been advertised to be let to the highest bidder. Twenty cavaliers, of all ages, ambitiously strove to please me: and if I had followed my own inclination, I should have chosen one that was young and handsome; but

with players, interest and ambition is only to be considered when a settlement is in the case: for which reason I preferred Don Ambrosio de Nisana, a man both old and ill-made, but rich, generous, and one of the most powerful noblemen of Andalusia. Indeed I made him pay well for it; he hired me a large house, which he furnished elegantly, provided me with a good cook, a couple of footmen, a chamber-maid, and a thousand ducats a-month to defray my expences, besides a quantity of jewels and rich cloaths.

This made a great change in my fortune; too much for my weak head to bear. I appeared quite different to myself from what I was formerly. I am not surprised that girls so soon forget the meanness and misery which they are extracted from by men of quality. I frankly own to you, that the public applause, the flattery I met with on all sides, and Don Ambrosio's passion, all contributed to raise my vanity even to extravagance. I thought my talent equal to a title, and assumed the airs of a woman of quality; and becoming as sparing of my favourable smiles as I had been before prodigal of them, I determined to look out for dukes, counts, or marquises.

Don Ambrosio came every night to sup with me, bringing with him some of his friends, and I endeavoured to invite our most chearful actresses, so that we usually spent the evening in laughing and drinking. I found this agreeable life agree very well with me; but, alas! it lasted only half a year. Noblemen are very subject to change; if they were not, they would be too amiable. Don Ambrosio left me for a young coquette, who was just come from Grenada to Seville, with some charms, and smartness enough to make her advantage of it. His inconstancy did not afflict me above four and twenty hours; I put in his place a cavalier of two

and twenty, named Don Lewis d'Alcacer, so handsome, that few Spaniards could be compared to him.

Undoubtedly you will ask me, how I happened to take so young a lord, I who knew the consequences? and you may well ask that question. But Don Lewis had neither father nor mother, and already enjoyed his estate; these consequences are only to be feared by girls of a servile condition, as common street-walkers. Women of our rank are not answerable for the effects of our charms; so much the worse for the families whose heirs we pillage.

D'Alcacer and I were so strongly attached to each other, that I believe no mutual passion ever equalled ours: it appeared as if we were enchanted, and all our acquaintance imagined us to be the most happy couple, though we in reality were the most miserable; for though Don Lewis's person was extremely handsome, yet he was very jealous, and hurt me vastly by his unjust suspicions. It would have signified nothing for me to have humoured his weakness, and to have constrained myself never to look at a man; his jealousy was so ingenious in finding out crimes to lay to my charge, that it rendered my caution of no use. Quarrels imbittered our most tender moments, and made them intolerable; we both lost patience, and parted on good terms. Would you imagine that the most pleasing day we passed together was the last? Both equally tired with the miseries we had undergone, our countenances expressed great joy at parting. We resembled two miserable captives, who recover their freedom after a rude slavery.

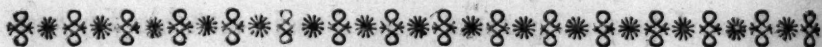
That adventure has made me be upon my guard ever since against love. I will never contract attachments to disturb my quiet again; it is not proper for

people of our profession to sigh and whine; we ought not secretly to entertain a passion which we ridicule in public.

Fame was not idle all this time; she spread it all about, that I was an incomparable actress. On the assurance of this goddess, the players of Grenada solicited me to enter into their company, and to let me see that it was not to be rejected, they sent an account of their daily expences, and terms of agreement, from which I found that it would be my interest to comply. I accordingly accepted the offer, although at the same time I was sorry to part from Phenice and Dorothea, for whom I had as great a regard as is possible for people of the same sex to have for each other. The first I left at Seville, employed in melting down the plate of a little goldsmith, who would have an actress for his mistress, out of vanity. I forgot to tell thee, that on commencing comedian, I changed my name from Laura to Estella; and I set out from Grenada under that name.

My first appearance here was no less fortunate than at Seville, for I immediately found myself surrounded with admirers. But having resolved to favour none but in an honourable way, I behaved with so great reserve, that they were blinded by my modest appearance. However, that I might not be the dupe of a conduct which would be of no use to me, nor indeed was it natural to me, I was on the point of listening to a young Oydar, by birth a citizen, who assumed the nobleman by virtue of his office, kept an elegant table, and good equipage, when I first saw the Marquis de Marialva. This Portuguese nobleman travelling through Spain out of curiosity, made some stay at Grenada. Happening to be at the playhouse one night, when I did not make my appearance, he considered the actresses with great at-

tention; one of whom happened to please him. He made an acquaintance with her next day, and the bargain was nearly concluded, when he saw me. My appearance and coquetish airs soon turned the scale; and the Portuguese no longer thought of any one but me. To own the truth, I spared no pains to deprive my companion of the conquest she had made, and I was so fortunate as to succeed. I dare say she bears me a grudge for my good fortune, but I cannot help that; she ought to consider, that these things are common amongst women, even the most intimate friends.



C H A P. VIII.

*The Reception the Players at Grenada gave to Gil Blas.
He meets with an old Acquaintance behind the Scenes.*

AS soon as Laura had ended her story, an old actress, who lived in the neighbourhood, came in to take her with her to the playhouse. This venerable lady would have been proper to have acted the part of the goddess Cotys. My sister was determined to introduce her brother to this superannuated figure, and many compliments passed on both sides.

I left them together, telling Zendonno's widow that I would meet her at the theatre, as soon as I had ordered my things to the Marquis of Marialva's house, to which he gave me a direction. I went to the chamber I had taken; and after having paid my landlady, I went with a porter, who carried my cloakbag to a large furnished house, where my new master lived. I met his steward at the door, who asked me if I was not dame Estella's brother. I answered, that I was. Then you

are welcome, Signior Cavalier, said he. The Marquis de Marialva, to whom I have the honour to be steward, has desired me to receive you kindly. There is a room prepared for you; I will shew you the way to it, if you please. Upon which he carried me to the top of the house, and shewed me into so small a room, that a very narrow bed, a chest, and a couple of chairs quite filled it. You will be much straitened for room here, said my conductor; but to make it up, I will promise you an elegant lodging at Lisbon. I locked my portman-teau into a closet, put the key into my pocket, and enquired at what hour they supped. He answered, that the Marquis kept no table at home, but gave every servant so much a month for his board. I found by several other questions that I put to him, that the people who belonged to the Marquis were a parcel of happy flug-gards. After a little more conversation, I parted with the steward, on purpose to return again to Laura, agreeably engrossed with the thoughts of my new place.

As soon as I arrived at the play-house, and informed them that I was Estella's brother, every place was open to me. The guards were as ready to make way for me, as if I had been one of the most eminent persons in Grenada. All the servants and door-keepers made me low bows. But what I am desirous to paint to the reader was my serio-comical reception behind the scenes; where I found the whole company dressed, and ready to begin. The actors and actresses, to whom Laura presented me, poured in upon me in crouds. The men stifled me with their embraces, and the women applied their painted faces to mine, and daubed it all over, each desirous of being the first to pay their compliments; they all spoke at once, and it was impossible for me alone to answer them: but happily for me, my sis-

ter came to my assistance, and her tongue being used to talking, did not leave me in debt to any one.

The embraces of the actors and actresses was not all; I was obliged to endure the civilities of the scene-painters, musicians, prompter, candle-snuffer and his deputy, and all the servants of the theatre, who at the report of my arrival came running to see me. One would have imagined that they were all foundlings, who never knew what it was to have a brother.

The performance being now begun, some gentlemen ran to take their places, while I, like one of the house, remained to amuse myself with the actors who had nothing to do. I heard one of them called Melchior; I was struck at the name, and looking attentively at the person, I thought I had seen him somewhere. At last I recollected that he was Melchior Zapata, that poor stroller, who, as I mentioned in my first volume, was dipping crusts of bread in a spring.

Accordingly taking him aside, I said, If I am not mistaken, you are that Signior Melchior whom I had the honour to breakfast with one day at the side of a clear spring, between Valladolid and Segovia. I was in company with a barber lad. We had some provisions, which, added to yours, made a slight repast, which was seasoned with a thousand agreeable sallies. Zapata hesitated a while; after which he answered, You mention a circumstance which I easily recollect. I was then coming from acting at Madrid, and was returning to Zamora; and I also remember, that I was very poor at that time. By the same token I likewise remember, cried I, that your doublet was lined with playhouse bills; and you also complained of having too chaste a wife. Oh, said Zapata quickly, my wife is much reformed in that particular, which makes me now be better clothed.

Just as I was going to congratulate him upon his wife's reformation, he was obliged to go upon the stage, and leave me. As I was desirous to know his wife, I made up to an actor, to desire him to shew her to me; which he did, saying, There is Narcissa, the handsomest of our ladies, except your sister. I suspected it was she in whose favour the Marquis de Marialva had declared himself before he saw Estella; and was right in my conjecture. When the play was ended, I conducted Laura to her lodging, where I saw several cooks employed preparing a fine entertainment. You may sup here, said she. Indeed I will not, answered I; probably the Marquis may chuse to be alone with you. Not at all, replied she: he, with two of his friends, and one of our people, are to be here; and if you do not make the sixth, it will be your own fault. You know it is the custom when with players to allow their secretaries to dine with them. Very true, said I; but it would be too soon for me to put myself upon the footing of a favourite secretary. I must enjoy his confidence, before I can deserve that honourable privilege. So saying, I left Laura, and went to my eating-house, whither I was determined to go every day, as my master kept no table.



C H A P. IX.

An Account of a particular Sort of a Man he supped with that Evening, and what passed between them.

THERE was in the hall a sort of an old monk dressed in gray bays, who sat alone in a corner at supper. I took my seat just opposite to him, out of curiosity, and saluted him very civilly, and he did not appear less polite. My pittance was brought me, which I began to with a very good appetite. And while I sat silent eating my supper, I frequently looked at this person, whose eyes I also found fixed on me. Tired with his constant staring, I thus addressed him: Father, do you think that we have ever seen each other before? You seem to observe me as if I were not quite unknown to you.

He gravely replied, If I look at you attentively, it is only to admire the great variety of adventures which are delineated in the features of your face. I see, answered I in a rallying tone, that your reverence understands metoposcopy. I can boast of being master of it, answered the monk, and of having made predictions which have been verified by the sequel. I am also well versed in chiromancy, and dare to say, that my oracles are infallible, when the lines of the hand and face are compared together.

Notwithstanding this old man had much the appearance of wisdom, I thought him so foolish, that I could not avoid laughing in his face. Instead of taking offence at my rudeness, he smiled at it, and continued his discourse in these words, first looking round to see that nobody was within hearing. I do not wonder,

said he, at seeing you so prepossessed against two sciences, which are now thought so trifling in this age. The tedious and painful study which they require, discourages all learned men, who renounce and descry them, out of despair of being able to acquire them. For my part, I was not disheartned with the obscurity in which they are shrouded, nor with the difficulties which always arise in the search of chymical secrets, and in the surprizing art of transmutating metals into gold.

But, continued he, recollecting himself, I forget that I am speaking to a young gentleman, to whom my conversation must seem quite chimerical. A specimen of my abilities will induce you to think more favourably of me than any thing I can say. Upon which he took from his pocket a vial of red coloured liquor, saying, Here is an elixir I this morning composed of the juice of certain plants, distilled in an alembic; for I have, like Democritus, spent my life in discovering the properties of simples and minerals. You shall see its virtues. This wine we have been drinking at supper is abominably bad; you shall see it become excellent. He accordingly put two drops of his elixir into my bottle, which rendered it more delicious than the best wine that is drank in Spain.

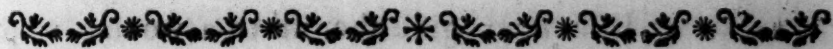
Wonderful things strike the imagination; and when that is touched, there is no more use for the judgment. Delighted with so fine a secret, and supposing he must be more than a devil, to be master of that art, I exclaimed in a transport of admiration, Forgive me, O father, for taking you at first for an old fool. I now do your great capacity justice. I need see no more to be convinced that you could in an instant convert a bar of iron into an ingot of gold, if you pleased. Could I be possessed of so admirable a secret, how happy should I be! God preserve you from it! said the old man with

a deep sigh; my son, you are insensible what a fatal secret you wish for. You ought to pity me rather than envy me, for having taken so much pains to make myself unhappy: I am never easy, but in constant fears of having a prison for my reward. Full of those apprehensions, I lead a rambling life, disguised sometimes like a priest, or a monk, and sometimes like a peasant, or cavalier. Is it then an advantage to make gold at such a price? and are not riches a real torment to those who cannot peaceably enjoy them?

These appear very reasonable sentiments, said I to the philosopher; nothing is preferable to a quiet life: if you can inform me of the future events of my life, I shall be satisfied. With all my heart, answered he; my child, I have already considered your features, let me now look at your hand. I presented it to him with a confidence which will not do me much honour in the opinion of most readers. After having examined it attentively, he exclaimed, Oh, what transitions from grief to joy, and from joy to grief! what a succession of disgraces and good fortune! but you have already experienced many of these vicissitudes: you have not now many more misfortunes to undergo, and a nobleman will provide you an agreeable settlement.

After assuring me that I might depend upon his prediction, he took his leave, and went from the eating-house, leaving me full of what I had heard. I made no doubt but the Marquis de Marialva was the nobleman mentioned, and consequently the accomplishment of the oracle seemed very probable. But if I had not had the least hint of it, I should have given credit to the counterfeit monk, so much authority had he gained in my opinion by his elixir. And for my part, that I might hasten the happiness that was foretold, I determined to attend more diligently on the Marquis, than I had done

on any of my future masters. With this fixed resolution, I retired to our house with unexpressible joy; no fortune-teller ever gave more satisfaction than in this case.



CHAP. X.

The Commission which Gil Blas received from the Marquis de Marialva, and how he discharged it.

THE Marquis being not yet returned from his affairs, I found his valets de chambre entertaining themselves in his apartment playing at primero till he came. I joined them, and we diverted ourselves till two o'clock in the morning, when he made his appearance. He seemed a little surpris'd to see me, and pleasantly said, How, Gil Blas, not gone to bed yet? This manner of speaking made me imagine that he was pleas'd with his evening's pleasure, and I answer'd, that I was desirous to know if he had any orders for me before he went to bed. I may perhaps have some commission for you to-morrow morning, answer'd he; it will be then time enough to tell you them, so you may go to rest: and remember after this, that I will dispense with your attendance in the evening: I only want my valets de chambre.

When I had got this information, which secretly gave me pleasure, as it sav'd me from a piece of subjection which would have been very disagreeable, I left the Marquis in his apartment, and repaired to mine in the garret. I went to bed: but not being inclined to sleep, I determin'd to follow the advice given us by Pythagoras, to recollect in bed all we had done through

the day, on purpose to approve of our good actions, and condemn our bad ones.

My conscience was not clear enough to be pleased with my conduct. I disapproved my having supported the imposture of Laura. In vain did I suggest that I could not in honour give the lie to a woman whose only intention was to please me, and I found myself under a necessity of being an accomplice with her in the treachery. Not satisfied with this excuse, I answered, that I ought not to have pushed matters so far, and that it was great impudence in me to continue with a nobleman, whose confidence I repaid so ill. In short, after a severe examination, I agreed, that if I was not a rogue, I much resembled one. Then recollecting the consequences, I thought that I ran a great risque in deceiving a man of quality, who, for my sins, might probably find out the trick in a little time. So wise a reflection made me very apprehensive; but my fears were soon dispersed by the ideas of interest and pleasure; and the prophecy of the elixir-man assisted in removing my dread. I now gave myself up to the most agreeable fancies, and began to reckon what would be the amount of my wages after ten years service. To this I added the value of the presents I should receive from my master, and reckoning them by his generous disposition, or rather my own desires, I gave such scope to my imagination, as set no bounds to my good fortune. So much wealth gradually lulled me to rest, busied in building castles in the air.

Next morning I arose at eight o'clock, to receive the orders of my patron; but when I opened the door, I was much surprised to see him alone before me in his morning-gown and night-cap. He addressed me thus: Gil Blas, when I left your sister last night, I promised to wait upon her this morning; but I am prevented

from keeping my word, by business of consequence. Go to her, and assure her from me, that the disappointment mortifies me: but that I certainly shall sup with her to-night. This is not all, said he, putting a shagreen box ornamented with diamonds, and a purse into my hand, carry my picture to her, and keep the purse to yourself, as a proof of the friendship I have for you. I took the picture in one hand, and the purse, which I so little deserved, in the other; and going immediately to Laura with great joy, I said to myself, Well, the prophecy will be plainly fulfilled. How lucky it is to be brother to such a pretty girl! it is a pity there should not be as much honour as profit in it.

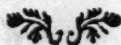
I surprised Laura at her toilet; she was accustomed to rise early, which is not usual with people of her profession; she was in expectation of the Portuguese, and had joined to her natural beauty all the charms that art and coquetry could give. When I entered, I cried, Amiable Estella, who hast the pleasure to attract all strangers, I may now sit at table, since my master has honoured me with a commission which gives me that privilege. He desires me to inform you, that he cannot have the pleasure of your company this morning as he intended; but to make amends for that, he will do himself the pleasure of supping with you in the evening: he sends his picture to you, which I dare say will be very acceptable.

Accordingly I delivered the box to her; the sparkling of the diamonds gave her great pleasure. She looked into it slightly, shut it again, and admiring the jewels, commended the beauty of them, and said smiling, These are copies which are admired by players more than originals.

I then informed her of the generous Portuguese having made me a present of fifty pistoles at the same time

that he intrusted me with the picture. I congratulate you upon it, said she. This nobleman begins where others very seldom end. I replied, My dear creature, it is to you I am indebted for this present; it was entirely on account of my being your brother. I should be very well pleased, said she, if he would be as generous to you every day. I cannot find words to tell you how dear you are to me. I was strongly attached to thee from the first minute I saw thee; even when I lost thee at Madrid, I still hoped to find thee again; and when I saw thee yesterday, I received thee as a man whom I expected fate should send back to me again. In short, my dear, we are destined for each other, and you shall be my husband; but in the first place we must save some money. It will be necessary for me to have two or three more intrigues to make us happy for life.

I politely returned her thanks for the trouble she intended to give herself on my account, and we imperceptibly engaged in a conversation, which continued till dinner-time; when I returned to give my master an account how his present was received: and notwithstanding Laura had given me no directions, I did not fail to study a compliment on the road to repeat in her name; but it was of no use. For when I got home, I found the Marquis gone out; and it was resolved that I should not see him again; as the following chapter will inform the reader.





C H A P. XI.

Gil Blas is thunderstruck by a Piece of News which he hears.

WHEN I went to my eating-house, I met with two men, who were conversing very agreeably; I joined them, dined, and talked with them till it was time to go to the play, when I went to the theatre, and they about their respective business. However, it must be observed, that I had great reason to be in good temper: the conversation I had with these two gentlemen was gay and lively; my fortune had the most promising aspect; yet I could not help giving way to melancholy, without knowing any particular reason why, and I could not keep up my spirits. It was undoubtedly a presage of the misfortune which was to happen.

When I entered the green room, Melchior Zapata came to me, and softly desired me to follow him, which I accordingly did. He thus addressed me: Signior cavalier, I think it my duty to give you some intelligence of great consequence. You know that the Marquis de Marialva at first had a passion for my wife Narcissa, and fixed a day to come and partake of my rib, when the artful Estella took a method to break off the bargain, and draw the Portuguese nobleman to her own charms. It is very easy to be imagined that an actress must be much provoked to lose such a prey. This sticks in my wife's stomach, and she would do any thing to be revenged, which she has now an opportunity of doing. If you recollect, last night our waiters ran to see you. The under-snuffer of the candles told some of our people that you are not Estella's brother.

These accounts, said Melchior, has reached the ears of Narcissa, who did not fail to interrogate the author, who has confirmed his assertion, by letting her know that you were Arsenia's valet, and Estella served her at that time under the name of Laura. My wife, delighted with this discovery, will acquaint the Marquis de Marialva, (who will be at the play this evening). Manage your affairs accordingly with regard to it: if you really are not Estella's brother, I advise you in a friendly manner, on account of our old acquaintance, to provide for your safety. Narcissa asks only one victim, and allows me to give you this notice, that you may by your immediate flight prevent an unlucky accident.

It was unnecessary for me to say any more of the affair. I returned the player thanks for his information, and he soon perceived by my terror, that I could not give the candle-snuffer the lie. I could not carry my impudence so far. I could not so much as take my leave of Laura, for fear she should insist upon my facing it out. I knew very well that she had so much skill that she could easily extricate herself out of this dilemma: but I could see nothing but infallible punishment for myself; which my love was not strong enough to make me brave: therefore my chief study was how to save myself and my goods. I quickly disappeared from the play-house, and had my portmanteau carried to a mulateer's, who was to set out at three o' clock next morning for Toledo. I wished to be with the Count de Polan, whose house seemed my only place of safety; but I was not there yet, and it gave me the greatest uneasiness to remain in a city, where I was in constant fear that they would make a search for me, even that night.

Notwithstanding this, I went to sup at my eating-

house, tho' my dread was as great as that of a debtor, who knows that the bailiffs are at his heels. What I eat that night I believe did not produce excellent chyle in my stomach. I was the miserable sport of fear; I stared at every body that entered the hall: and when there unluckily appeared any bad-looking fellows, which frequently happens in these places, I trembled for fear. Having eat my supper in constant alarms, I got up from the table, and returned to my mule-driver's, where I laid myself down upon clean straw, till the time we were to set out.

During this time, my patience was put to a very severe trial. A thousand tormenting reflexions came into my head; and when I happened to fall asleep, I imagined in my dreams that I saw the Marquis spoiling Laura's fair face with blows, and breaking every thing around her; I also thought that I heard him command his servants to beat me to death. Then I would start out of my sleep; and my waking, which is generally so pleasing after a disagreeable dream, was more terrible to me than even my slumbers.

Fortunately for me, the carrier came to deliver me from my uneasiness, by letting me know that he was ready to set out. I directly got up, and, thank God, proceeded on my journey, cured of the thoughts of Laura and chiromancy. As we travelled from Grenada, my mind grew more easy. I began to converse with the carrier, and was entertained with some pleasant stories, which he told me; so that my apprehensions insensibly wore off. I got a sound sleep at Ubeda, where we stopped the first night, and on the fourth we got to Toledo.

My first business was to make enquiry for the Count de Polan's house, where I went, expecting that he would not allow me to lodge any where but with him: but

when I arrived, I found him absent, and nobody at home but the housekeeper, who informed me that her master set out for the castle of Leyva the evening before, having heard that Seraphina was exceeding ill.

I fully expected to find the Count at home; therefore his absence greatly lessened the pleasure which I promised myself, and induced me to take another resolution. As I was so near Madrid; I determined to go there, imagining that I might push myself at court; and I understood that a fine genius was not necessary for advancement. The next day I got the opportunity of a horse, which was to return to that capital of Spain; where fortune conducted me, in order to act parts of greater consequence than I had yet performed.



C H A P. XII.

Gil Blas lodges at a ready-furnished House, where he becomes acquainted with Don Hannibal de Chinchilla: an Account of him, and his Business at Madrid.

WHEN I arrived at Madrid, I took a ready-furnished lodging; in the same house there was an old captain, who came from the farther end of New Castile, to solicit for a pension at court, as he thought himself very well deserving of it. He was called Don Hannibal de Chinchilla. His first appearance surprised me. He was a man upwards of sixty years of age, of a gigantic size, very thin, and had a pair of thick whiskers, which curled up to his temples on both sides; he wanted a leg and an arm, and over one eye he wore a green silk plaster; besides having many sores in his face. Setting these things aside, he was pretty much like another man. He was possessed of a good deal of wit

and gravity; he was very scrupulous in his morals, and valued his delicacy in point of honour.

When I had two or three times conversed with him, he favoured me with his confidence, and made me acquainted with all his affairs. He informed me that he had lost an eye at Naples, an arm in Lombardy, and his leg in the Low Countries. What I most admired in his account of his battles and sieges was, that he did not omit one vain glorious expression that could be to his advantage; though I would willingly have forgiven him for boasting of that half of himself which remained, to make him amends for the loss of the other. Officers who return from the wars unhurt are not always so modest.

He told me that what gave him the greatest concern was, that he had spent a considerable income in his campaigns, and reduced his fortune to a hundred ducats a-year, which was hardly sufficient to keep his whisks in order, pay for his lodging, and writing his petitions. For, added he, in short, Signior Cavalier, thank God, I present a petition every day, without success. One would imagine that the Prime Minister and I had laid a wager, which of us should first tire, I in giving, or he in receiving. I have also done myself the honour to present several to the King; but such man such master, and in the mean time my castle of Chinchilla sinks into ruins for want of repairs.

I said to the Captain, One must not despair; probably you may now be near seeing all your labours repaid with interest. I ought not to cherish these hopes, replied Don Hannibal. I spoke to one of the prime minister's secretaries within these three days, and, from what he told me, I believe I may be very easy. And pray what did he say to you then, Signior? cried I. Did not your situation make him think you deserving of a

reward? You shall judge, answered Chinchilla; the secretary told me very plainly, Master What d'ye call um, do not boast so much of your zeal and fidelity; you have only done your duty in exposing yourself to dangers for the welfare of your country. The glory which attends great actions is a sufficient reward, and ought to satisfy a Spaniard. You must therefore be undeceived, if you look upon the gratuity you solicit as a debt due to you; if it should be granted to you, you will be indebted to the king's goodness for it; he is pleased to think himself obliged to his subjects who have served the state very well. By this you see, said the Captain, that the other half of me is still in arrears to my country, and that I shall probably return as I came.

It is natural to be interested for the sufferings of a brave man. I advised him to continue his solicitations, and promised to write his petitions gratis. I even went so great a length as to offer him my purse, and intreat him to take what money he wanted: but he was not very forward in this; he appeared delicate, and returned me thanks for my good will, telling me, that as he did not chuse to be a burthen to any body, he had accustomed himself to live so frugally, that very little food would serve him: which really was very true; for he lived entirely upon leeks and onions; and indeed he was nothing but skin and bone; and that nobody might see his poor food, he used to shut himself up in his chamber at meal-time. However, by repeated intreaties, I at length prevailed on him to dine and sup with me; and deceiving his pride by an ingenious compassion, I ordered more victuals and drink than I could destroy myself. He was very ceremonious at first, but at last yielded to my importunity. After which he grew more bold, and assisted me in emptying my plate and bottle.

After having drank four or five glasses, and reconciled his stomach to good nourishment, he said with a lively air, Indeed, Signior Gil Blas, you are very seducing, and make me just do as you please. Your manner prevents me from being afraid of imposing upon your good nature. By this time my Captain's modesty seemed to be so much conquered, that if I had pressed him again to accept of my purse, I do not imagine he would have refused it; but I did not put him to the trial again. I was satisfied with having made him my mess-mate, and taking the trouble both to assist him in composing his petitions, and transcribing them for him: for by being accustomed to write fair copies of the homilies, I had learned to give a phrase a fine turn, and was become a kind of author. On the other hand, the old officer piqued himself on his knowledge in composition: so that each striving to outvie the other, we made pieces of eloquence worthy of the most celebrated orators of Salamanca. But it was to no purpose for either of us to exhaust our genius for flowers of rhetoric to embellish those petitions. Whatever expedient we fell upon to inhance the services of Don Hannibal, the court paid no regard to it. The old invalid was not induced by this to make a panegyric upon such officers as ruined themselves in the wars. In this ill temper he cursed his bad fortune, and wished that the devil had got Naples, Lombardy and the Low Countries.

What made his mortification still greater, one day before his eyes he saw a poet introduced by the Duke d'Alba, who having recited before the King an ode on the birth of an Infanta, was rewarded with a pension of four hundred ducats. I thought the mangled captain would have run mad, if I had not taken great pains to compose him. When I perceived him so much agitated, I asked him what was the matter, and told him

there was nothing in this to give him pain. Has it not always been the custom to make princes pay tribute to the muses? These gentlemen are always gratified with a pension by every crowned head; and quietly between you and I, these kinds of rewards are generally transmitted to the knowledge of posterity, and immortalize the generosity of monarchs; whereas other recompences which they bestow are frequently no credit to their reputation. How many has Augustus rewarded? How many pensions bestowed, which we are ignorant of? But the most distant posterity, as well as we, will know, that Virgil received from that emperor about two thousand crowns.

All I could say to Don Hannibal had little effect; the fruits of the sonnet still stuck in his stomach; he determined to give up his pursuit; and his last push was to make one more petition to the Duke of Lerma. With this intention we both went to the house of the prime minister, where we met with a young man, who, after saluting the Captain, said to him affectionately, My dear old master, is it you I see? What has brought you here? If you require the assistance of a person who has interest with his Excellency, command me; you are welcome to my good offices. How, Pedrillo, answered the officer, one would imagine, to hear you talk, that you enjoy some important post in this family. The young man replied, I have at least interest enough to be of use to an honest country gentleman like you. If it be so, said the Captain smiling, I will have recourse to your assistance. I agree to it, said Pedrillo. Let me know your business, I will obtain something of the prime minister for you.

No sooner had we satisfied this obliging young man, than he enquired for Don Hannibal's lodgings of which he was informed; he assured us that we should hear of

him next day, and left us, without saying what his intentions were, or whether he belonged to the Duke of Lerma. I was anxious to know who this sprightly young man was. The Captain replied, He is a young man who served me some years ago, and perceiving my circumstances bad, he left me, to look out for a better place, which I cannot blame him for. It is natural for people to do the best they can for themselves. He is a smart fellow, and does not want wit, and is as intriguing as the devil. But notwithstanding his art, I do not depend much upon the zeal he professes for my welfare. Probably he may be useful to you, said I; if he belong to some of the duke's principal officers, he may do you a service; as amongst great people every thing is carried on by intrigues and cabals; they are led by the nose, and those in their turn are ruled by their footmen.

Pedrillo came next morning to our lodging. Gentlemen, said he, if I did not explain myself yesterday about the means I had of assisting Captain Chinchilla, the reason was because we were in an improper place for such conversation: besides, I was willing to try if the thing was feasible, before I mentioned it to you. I must now inform you, that I am the favourite attendant of Signior Rodrigo de Calderona, first secretary to the Duke of Lerma. My master being very gallant, sups frequently with an Arragonian nightingale, whom he keeps near the court; she is a very handsome young girl, from Albarazin, is sensible, and sings admirably well. She is called Signiora Sirena. As I carry her a billet-doux every morning, I have just now seen her; and have proposed to her that she own Don Hannibal as her uncle, and under pretence of that, engage her gallant to protect him. She is ready to undertake it; for besides the advantage she expects it will be to herself, she is pleased to have this gentleman pass for her uncle.

This proposal made Signior de Chinchilla look very sour; he expressed a great dislike to being an accomplice in such a trick, and more in allowing a jilt to dishonour his family, by pretending to be one of it. His disgust was not only on his own account, but he foresaw it would be a disgrace to his family. This delicacy appeared very unseasonable to Pedrillo, who was much displeased. He exclaimed, You are not in earnest, certainly, to take it in that light? You cottage squires are such a foolish set of people, who make yourselves ridiculous by your vanity. Signior Cavalier, added he, addressing himself to me, do not his scruples amaze you? Good God! is it not a fine thing to be so nice about these matters at court? Fortune is never neglected there, whatever shape she may assume.

I commended Pedrillo's conversation, and our harangue had so good an effect, that Chinchilla consented to be the uncle of Sirena. When we had thus got the better of his pride, we began to write a fresh petition for the prime minister, which was accordingly reviewed, augmented, and corrected. I then wrote a fair copy, which Pedrillo carried to the Arragonian lady, who immediately put it into the hands of Signior Don Rodrigo, to whom she spake in such a manner, that the secretary really imagined her to be niece to the captain, and promised to use his interest for him. A few days discovered the effects of this work. Pedrillo returned triumphantly to our lodging, saying, Good news, Captain Chinchilla, the King intends to make a distribution of governments, benefices, and pensions, and you shall not be neglected. But I am desired to enquire what present you intend to make to Sirena. As for me, I am determined to have nothing. The pleasure of bettering my old master's fortune is preferable to any other advantage I could reap; but the nymph of Al-

barazin is quite of a different opinion; she is much of the disposition of a Jew, and would take money of her father for doing a piece of service to him; imagine if she would not then expect it from a pretended uncle?

Don Hannibal answered, Then let her only name her demands; if she chuses she shall have yearly a third of the pension I obtain, which ought to please her, if the whole revenue of his Catholick Majesty were at stake. For my part, replied Don Rodrigo's Mercury, I would chearfully depend upon your word, as I know the truth of it; but you have to deal with a little distrustful gipsy, who would rather chuse that you should give her two-thirds in ready money. And where the devil does she imagine I am to get it? answered the officer hastily; does she imagine I am a money-broker? You must certainly not have informed her of my circumstances. Forgive me, answered Pedrillo, she knows very well that you are as poor as Job. It is impossible that she can be ignorant of your circumstances, after what I have told her; but give yourself no concern about the affair, I am fertile in expedients. I am acquainted with an old rogue of a lawyer, who likes to lend his money at ten per cent. You shall make an assignment with security to him, before a notary, of the first year of your pension, for the same sum which you shall really have all accept the interest. With regard to the security, your castle of Chinchilla shall satisfy the lender, so that there shall be no dispute on that head.

The captain declared that he would agree to those conditions, if he should be fortunate enough to share in the favours which were to be distributed next day: which accordingly was the case; for he had the pleasure to be honoured with a pension of three hundred pistoles upon a certain commandery. As soon as he heard this good news, he gave all the security that was desired of

him, transacted his little business, and went to New-Castile, with some pistoles in his pocket.

C H A P. XIII.

Gil Blas and his dear Friend Fabricio meet at Court; their mutual Joy. Where they both went; and the curious Conversation that ensued.

I Accustomed myself to go every morning to the King's apartment, and spent two or three hours in seeing the grandees come and go; though they did not appear with the same splendor which they do in other places.

Walking backwards and forwards in my lodgings one day, in a very shabby dress, I perceived Fabricio, whom I had left at Valladolid, in the service of an hospital-director. What surprised me most was, that he talked freely with the Duke de Medina Sidonia, and the Marquis de Santa-Cruz. I thought these two noblemen seemed to listen attentively to him with pleasure; and he was extremely well dressed.

Am I not mistaken? said I to myself. Is it not the son of barber Nunez? Perhaps it may be some young courtier, who resembles him. I was not long in this uncertain state; the nobleman retired, and I made up to Fabricio, who immediately knew me, and making me push through the croud, My dear Gil Blas, said he embracing me, it gives me great pleasure to see you again. What are you doing at Madrid? Are you in any place? or have you some post at court? Let me know what you have been about since you left Valladolid. You ask me a great many questions at once, said I, and this is not a proper place to relate my adventures. You say very right, continued he; we shall be better at my lod-

gings, therefore we will retire there. It is only a small distance from this. I am agreeably settled, live quite independent, have good furniture, and am very happy with my situation.

I readily accepted his offer, and went with him. We stopped at an elegant house, where he told me he lived. We crossed a court, on one side of which there was a large stair-case that carried us to genteel apartments, and on the other side, a small pair of back stairs, narrow and dark, which carried us up to the lodging I had heard him talk so much of. There was only one room, which was converted into four by my ingenious friend, thin deal partitions separating each. The first served as an anti-chamber to the second, where he lay; the third he had made a closet of, and a kitchen of the last. He had hung the chamber and anti-chamber with maps, and the furniture was suitable to the hangings. It consisted of a large brocade bed, very much worn, some old chairs covered with yellow serge, and trimmed with fringe of the same colour; an old table with gilt feet, covered with leather, which had been once red, and trimmed with tinsel fringe, turned black through length of time; also an ebony cupboard, ornamented with figures coarsely carved. In his closet a little table supplied the place of a bureau, and his library was made up of a few books, and several parcels of papers upon the shelves. His kitchen, of a piece with all the rest, contained some earthen ware, and other useful utensils.

When Fabricio had given me time to examine his apartment, he asked my opinion of it, and his œconomy; does it not delight you? said he. Indeed it does, answered I smiling; you must have managed your affairs very well at Madrid, to be so well settled now: undoubtedly you have some commission. God forbid! answered he. The situation I am in is preferable to all other.

employments. A person of distinction, to whom this house belongs, gave me a room, which I divided into four, and furnished in the manner you see. I only employ myself in things which are agreeable to me, and I feel no wants. Explain yourself more plain, said I interrupting him; you only raise my curiosity to know what life you lead. Well, I will satisfy thee, answered he; I am turned author; I have commenced wit, and write both verse and prose; in short, I can do any thing.

I could not refrain from laughing, and exclaimed, Thou a favourite of Apollo! I never could have suspected such a thing. I should have been much less surprised to have found you in any other situation. What charms couldst thou find in the situation of a poet? Those people are generally despised in civil life, and have no settled ordinary. He in his turn exclaimed, O fie! you mean those wretched authors whose works are the refuse of booksellers and players. One cannot be surprised if such writers are not esteemed: but good authors are upon a better footing; and I may without vanity say, that I am of that number. I make no doubt of it, answered I; you have a great deal of wit; your compositions cannot be bad. I only am surprised how you have been seized with the fury of writing.

Nunez replied, thy surprise is just; while I was in the service of Don Manuel Ordonnez, I had no other wish, so well was I pleased with my situation. But my genius rising gradually, like Plautus's, above subjection, I composed a comedy, which was acted by the company who performed at Valladolid; and notwithstanding it was not worth a fig, it met with great applause: from which I supposed that the public was a good milk-cow, which readily parted with her store. This reflexion, joined to the great desire I had to compose new pieces, made me leave the hospital; the love of poetry took

my attachment from riches, and I determined to go to Madrid, as the center of wit, in order to refine my taste there. Upon which I desired the governor to give me my discharge, which he granted with regret, his esteem for me being not little. He enquired if I had any reason to be dissatisfied with my place. No, I replied, I am very sensible of your generosity and goodness: but one must follow one's destiny. I find myself born to immortalize my name by works of genius. What folly possesses thee! said the good citizen. Thou hast already taken root in the hospital, and art upon the foundation whence good stewards and governors are made. Thou wilt leave the substance for the shadow. Thy imprudence will give thee cause to repent.

The governor finding his oppositions were in vain, paid me my wages, and made me a present of fifty ducats, in return for my services. So that with that and what I had gleaned in the little commissions where-with I had been intrusted, I was in a situation when I came to Madrid to make a genteel appearance; which I did, notwithstanding the writers of our nation do not pique themselves on their neat appearance. I soon got acquainted with Lopez de Vega Carpio, Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra, and other eminent authors; but there was a young bachelor of Cordova, the incomparable Don Lewis de Gongora, the finest genius that ever Spain produced. This man I preferred to the others. He does not chuse to have his works published while he is living; he satisfies himself with reading them to his friends. And what is most remarkable, nature has endowed him with the rare talent of succeeding in all sorts of poetry. But he excels most in satire. He does not resemble Lucilius, a muddy river, that sweeps abundance of slime along with it, but is the Tagus, that rolls its limpid streams over golden sands. Thou draw-

est, said I to Fabricio, an agreeable picture of that young bachelor; and I make no doubt but a person of such merit has many envious enemies. All our authors, both good and bad, inveigh bitterly against him. One says he delights in bombast, puns, metaphors, and transpositions. Another says his verses are as obscure as those which the Salian Priests sung in their processions, which nobody understood. He is reproached by some likewise for composing sonnets or romances, sometimes comedies, stanzas, &c. as if he had taken in hand to surpass the best writers in all kinds of poetry. But all these efforts of jealousy are baffled by a muse that is cherished by all ranks of people, from the highest to the lowest.

I served my apprenticeship with this able master, and I dare say it appears in my writings. I have imbibed so much of his genius, that I have already composed some detached pieces, which he would think no disgrace to own as his; and according to his example, I recite my labours in great houses, where I am extremely well received, and I meet with people who are not ill to please. Indeed I have a good delivery, which is of service to my compositions. I am beloved by several noblemen, and live with the Duke of Medina Sidonia as Horace did with Mecænas. This, added Fabricio, is the way I became author. You have heard all I have to say at present; you must now relate your story.

Accordingly I began, and omitted every trifling circumstance in giving him the relation he desired. By this time dinner was ready; upon which he took out two napkins, the remains of a roasted shoulder of mutton, some bread, and a bottle of very good wine; and we both sat down at table, with all the cheerfulness of two friends met after a long separation. You see, said he, how independant I am. I might eat with people

of quality every day, but I have so great an inclination to write poetry, that I stay at home. I am an Aristippus; I can equally suit myself to the company of great men, and to retirement and frugality.

We found the wine so agreeable to our taste, that we opened another bottle, and after having finished our repast, I told him, that I would be glad to see some of his productions. He immediately looked out for a sonnet, which he read aloud with a proper emphasis: but notwithstanding his free manner of reading, I thought his performance so obscure, that I could not comprehend it; which he observed. This sonnet does not appear very plain to you, does it? I confessed that I could not understand it clearly. Upon which he laughed at me, and said it was so much the better. The natural and simple will not do for sonnets, odes, and other works that require the sublime. It is sufficient if the poet understands it himself. Do you banter me, friend? said I to him. There certainly should be good sense, and a clearness of expression, in poetry of all kinds. And if your favourite Gongora does not write more plain, he must sink greatly in my opinion. He is a poet who can never deceive any other age than his own. Now let me see some of your prose performances.

Upon which Nunez shewed me a preface, which he said he intended for a collection of comedies that were in the press, and asked my opinion of it. I told him I did not think more of his prose than his verse. Your sonnet is only bombast; and as for your preface, it is made up of far-fetched expressions, perplexed phrases, and uncommon words. In short, your style is very particular, the books of our good ancient authors are not written in that manner. Oh igneramus! exclaimed Fabricio, you are not sensible that every prose writer who aspires at the reputation of a delicate pen affects this sin-

gularity of stile, these uncommon expressions which shock you. There are a few bold innovators of us, who have taken in hand to turn the language upside down: and I hope in God we shall accomplish it, in spite of Lopez de Vega, Cervantes, and all the fine genius's, who find fault with our new manner of speaking. A number of partizans of distinction have seconded us, and some divines also.

But after all, continued he, our intention is commendable, and, setting prejudice aside, we are more to be valued than those easy writers who speak like the vulgar. I cannot think for what reason they are esteemed by so many persons of honour. Their manner was proper enough at Athens or Rome, where all the world were confounded; which is the reason why Socrates tells Alcibiades, that the people are an excellent schoolmaster. But at Madrid we have a good custom and a bad one; and our courtiers express themselves different from our citizens. In short, you may believe that our new stile carries the day from that of our antagonists. By one touch I will shew you the difference between the gentleness of our expression, and the flatness of theirs. For instance, they would say plainly, Interludes embellish a comedy; we would say with greater spirit, Interludes create beauty and elegance in a comedy. Observe that create beauty. Do not you see all the delicacy, gracefulness, and nobleness of the expression?

I interrupted my innovator by a fit of laughter. Fabricio, said I, this fine language of yours makes you quite an original. And you, replied he, are no better than a brute, with your natural stile. Go, added he, in the words of the Archbishop, and tell my treasurer to give you a hundred ducats, and heaven direct you with that sum. Farewell, Mr. Gil Blas, I wish you a better taste, and good luck. This flight made me laugh

more; and Fabricio did not lose his good temper, on account of my speaking so disrespectfully of his writings. We made an end of our second bottle, and got up from the table in a very good trim. We went out with an intention of walking in the Prado; but took a fancy to go into a tavern as we went along.

This house was generally frequented by good company. We saw in two halls many gentlemen who were amusing themselves at different diversions; in one, a set were playing at chess and primero, and in the other, ten or twelve people were giving attention to some professed wits who were disputing. There was no occasion to go very near them to hear their argument, they spoke with such heat and passion. A metaphysical proposition was the subject. They appeared like people possessed. One would imagine, that if Eleazar's ring had been put under their noses, the devils would have issued out with their breath. Good God! said I to my companion, what vivacity! what lungs! these disputants are fit to be public criers. The greatest part of mankind are misplaced. Certainly these people must be descended from the race of Novius the Roman banker, whose voice was louder than those of carmen. But, continued he, what is most disagreeable to me, one's ears are stunned to no purpose. We left them, by which means I escaped a violent headach, which I found attacking me. We went to the other hall, and placed ourselves in a corner, and while we were refreshing ourselves with cooling liquors, we sat and made our remarks upon the cavaliers as they came and went. Nunez knew most of them. O, says he, the dispute of our philosophers will not be soon finished. Those three men just come in will join them. But do you see those two odd looking men who are going out? That lean swarthy man, whose lank hair hangs down equally

before and behind, is called Don Julian de Villanuno. He is a young judge, who affects the pretty fellow. A few days ago a friend of mine and I went to dine with him, and surprised him in a very singular manner: he was in his closet, and amusing himself with making a grayhound fetch and carry the writings of a process, of which he is to make a report, and the dog tore them very genteelly. That licentiate with the red face, whom you see with him, is called Don Cherubin Tonto, a canon of the church of Toledo, a very weak man, though you would imagine him to be a man of wit by his sprightly smiling look. He has a sparkling eye, with a malicious sneer. One would imagine him to be a man of penetration. If he is present while a fine performance is read, he listens with such attention, that one would imagine he understood it, though he knows nothing of the matter. There was a great number of witty things said, but Don Cherubin did not speak a word, though he applauded them with gestures even more expressive than the sallies we uttered.

I asked Nunez, if he knew two shabby men who were sitting in a corner, with their elbows upon the table, talking together in a whisper. No, answered he, I have not the least knowledge of their faces, but they have much the appearance of coffee-house politicians, who censure the government. Take notice of that genteel young man, who walks about the room whistling, and supporting himself sometimes on one foot, and sometimes on the other. His name is Don Austin Moreto, a young poet, who had a natural genius, but his head is almost turned by flatterers and ignorant people. That man he is speaking to is one of his intimates, who turns prose into verse, and is also lunatic.

Still more authors! said he, pointing to two well-

no. A
with
he
g a
efs,
log
the
Don
, a
be
as a
l i,
pre-
with
ood
was
bin
with
ter-
who
the
he,
they
ans,
gen-
ing,
and
stin
but
peo-
intri-
atic.
well-

dressed men coming in: one would imagine they had agreed to pass here in review before you. The one is called Don Bernard Deseenguado, and the other Don Sebastian de Villa Viciofa. The first is an author born under the planet Saturn, a genius full of gall, a spiteful creature, who hates all the world, and is not beloved by any body. Don Sebastian is a young fellow who deals candidly, and will let nothing lie upon his conscience. He brought a performance upon the stage lately, which met with extraordinary success; and he is going to print it, that he may not abuse the esteem of the public.

The figure of the moving picture before our eyes was just going to be explained by Gongora's charitable pupil, when he was interrupted by a gentleman belonging to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, telling him, that his Grace wanted to speak with him at his own house immediately. Nunez knowing very well that a great man's desires should be immediately complied with, quitted me directly to wait upon his Mecænas, leaving me in astonishment at hearing him honoured with the title of Don, and in spite of Master Chrysofom the barber, his father, become enobled.



C H A P. XIV.

Gil Blas is introduced by Fabricio to the Service of Count Galiano, a Sicilian Nobleman.

SO desirous was I of seeing Fabricio again, that I paid him a visit early next morning. At my first entrance, I wished him a good morning, with the appellation of the flower of the Asturian nobility, which made him laugh heartily. So, says he, you observed that they called me Don? Yes, my gentleman, I did, and you must allow me to tell you, that when you related your metamorphoses yesterday, you omitted the best part of it. I confess I did so, answered he; but believe me, if I have assumed that honourable title, it was not so much to humour my own vanity, as to please other people. You are acquainted with the Spaniards. They have no regard for an honest man, if he has not the fortune to be possessed of either riches or birth. I must also inform you, that I see so many people who assume the name of Don Francisco, Don Pedro, or Don any thing you please, that, if there is no disgrace in the case, you must confess that the rank of nobility is very common; and agree that a plebeian of merit does them honour by his association.

But, continued he, let us leave off this subject; I supped at the Duke de Medina Sidonia's last night, where amongst other company was Count Galiano, a Sicilian nobleman of the first rank; the conversation turned upon the ridiculous effects of self-love. Being delighted with the opportunity of having it in my power to entertain the company on that subject, I amused them with the account of the homilies. You may be

sure your archbishop was censured as he deserved; this proved not unlucky for you; for every body pitied you, and Count Galiano, after having made many enquiries about you, which I answered properly, ordered me to bring you to him. I was just going to look for you on that account. He undoubtedly will give you the offer of being one of his secretaries; and I would advise you to accept of it. The Count is rich, and spends like an ambassador. He is come to court at Madrid to confer with the Duke of Lerma about some crown-lands, which that minister intends to alienate in Sicily. In short, Count Galiano is just, generous, and open, though a Sicilian. You cannot do better than attach yourself to him. Very likely he is the person by whom thou art to be enriched, as thou wast foretold at Grenada.

I told Nunez that I had determined to live at large some time, and enjoy myself, before I entered into service again; but he gave me so favourable an account of this Sicilian Count, that it induced me to alter my resolution, and wish to be there immediately. I make no doubt, answered he, but you may soon be there. We directly went together to wait upon the Count, who then lodged at the house of his friend Don Sanchez d'Avila, who was then in the country.

In the court we saw a great many pages and footmen, in genteel livery, and in the anti-chamber, several gentlemen and other officers, all elegantly dressed, but with such uncouth faces, that they appeared to me like apes in Spanish habits. There are some figures, both men and women, on whom art is thrown away in their dress, as it makes no amendment in their looks.

The Count was informed that Don Fabricio was there; he was admitted immediately, and I followed him. The Count was sitting upon a sofa, dressed in

his night-gown, drinking chocolate. We saluted him most respectfully, and he graciously bowed his head, and looked so pleasant, that he really gained my heart; which is very common when we meet with a favourable reception from a great man. It must be a very cool reception indeed which disgusts us.

After having finished his chocolate, he amused himself with playing with a large ape, which sat at his elbow. He called it Cupid. I cannot imagine why they gave that animal the name of that god, except it was because it had all his malice; for it resembled him in nothing else. However, he delighted his master greatly, who was so pleased with his tricks, that he had him frequently in his arms. Notwithstanding Nunez and I could not be entertained with this animal, we pretended to be very well pleased with him, which delighted the Sicilian so much, that he deigned to tell me: Friend, you shall be one of my secretaries, if it be agreeable to yourself. You shall have two hundred pistoles annually: it is sufficient that Don Fabricio recommends you. Nunez replied, I am not afraid to answer for my friend. I have more courage than Plato, who would not be answerable for one of his friends whom he sent to the tyrant Dionysius.

I with a low bow returned thanks to the Asturian poet for his confidence; then addressing myself to my patron, I promised zeal and fidelity. When this gentleman saw that his proposal was agreeable, he sent for his steward, and spoke to him in a low voice; then turning to me, said, Gil Blas, I will in a little acquaint you what your employment is to be; mean time you may go with my steward, who has got orders concerning you. Accordingly I withdrew, leaving Fabricio with the Count.

The steward was a sharp Messineze; he took me to

his apartment, and shewed me great civilities. Then he sent for the tailor who was employed in the family, and ordered him to make for me a suit of as genteel cloaths as those wore by any of the principal officers. He then told me he knew a room that would suit me: but, added he, have you breakfasted? I told him I had not. Poor man, said he, why did you not speak? I will shew you a place where you may have any thing you chuse to ask for.

Upon which he took me down to the buttery, where the butler was; he was a true Neapolitan, full as cunning as the Messineze. The steward and he were very much alike. This honest butler was seated with five or six of his friends, feasting upon ham, neats-tongues, and other relishing victuals, which made the liquor go down pleasantly. We joined those hearty fellows, and assisted them in dispatching the Count's rich wines. While this work was going on in the buttery, they were behaving much in the same manner in the kitchen, where the cook was entertaining some tradesmen of his acquaintance; they were stuffing themselves with rabbit and partridge pies. Even the scullions were making merry with the plunder they could get. I thought I was in a house that was given up to destruction: but what I saw now was trifling in comparison of what I afterwards beheld.



C H A P. XV.

Of Gil Blas's Employment in Count Galiano's House.

I WENT to bring my baggage to my new habitation. The Count was at dinner when I returned, with several noblemen, and the poet Nunez, who called with ease for what he wanted, and joined in the conversation. I saw that every word he spoke entertained the company. How happy it is to be possessed of a genius! a man of wit may do as he pleases.

I dined with the officers, who were treated much in the same manner as their master. When dinner was ended, I withdrew to my own room, where I began to think on my situation. Well, Mr. Gil Blas, said I, you are now in a Sicilian Count's service, with whose character you are quite unacquainted. To judge by appearances, you will live in clover. But we must assure ourselves of nothing; you have too often experienced the severity of your fate, and besides you do not know for what employment you are intended. He already has two secretaries and a steward: what use can he have for you, except he intends to make you his Mercury? One cannot be on a better footing, in order to make way to a good employment. He who is confined to honourable posts alone, rises but slowly, and seldom gains his point.

While these reflections engrossed my mind, a footman came to tell me that all the company were gone, and the Count wanted to speak with me. I ran directly to his apartment, where I found him laid upon the sofa, ready to take a nap, with his baboon, which was always with him.

Come near, Gil Blas, said he, take a chair, and hear what I have to say. I obeyed him, and he spoke in the following manner. Don Fabricio informs me, that, among other good qualities you possess, you have that of attaching yourself to your masters, and that you are a person of integrity. These two qualities induced me to take you into my service. I would gladly have an affectionate servant, who will espouse my interest, and give all due attention to the good of my estate. Though I am rich, my yearly expences exceed my income greatly. I am very sensible of the reason; my servants plunder me. I am in my own house, as if I was in a wood surrounded with thieves. I suspect that my steward and butler connive together, which is sufficient to ruin me. You will say that I may dismiss them, if I believe them to be rogues; but the difficulty is, where to get honest ones. I will have you to inspect them, and if you acquit yourself properly, you will find your account in it. I will settle you in Sicily to your advantage.

After having ended his discourse, he dismissed me, and in the evening I was proclaimed superintendant of the house, in presence of all his domestics. This did not seem to affect the Messineze and Neapolitan at first, as they imagined I would be a jolly companion, who would join with them; and that they might go on in their old way, if they allowed me to partake of the spoil. But next day they both looked very blank, when I told them I disdained all breach of trust, and demanded an account of provisions from the butler. I took also an inventory of all the cellars contained, as well as of all the plate and table-linen. Then I recommended oeconomy to them, and begged they might be careful how they disposed of our patron's money; and de-

clared that I would inform the nobleman of every thing that I saw amiss in his house.

Even this was not all; I was determined to have a spy to discover if there was any secret understanding between them. For this purpose I fixed upon a scullion, whom I won by promises; he told me I could not have fixed upon a more proper person, to get intelligence of every thing that passed in the house. He informed me that the steward and butler were in a confederacy, and lighted the candle at both ends; that it was their daily practice to convey away half of the victuals that were bought: and he also told me that the Neapolitan kept a lady, who lived opposite to the college of St. Thomas, and the Messineze entertained another at the Sun-gate; and that these two ladies every morning received all kinds of provisions: that the cook also conveyed good victuals to a favourite widow in the neighbourhood, and on account of his services to the steward and butler, he as well as they disposed of the wines in the cellar. In short, these three were the occasion of great expence to the Count. If you doubt the truth of what I say, continues the scullion, go to the college of St. Thomas to-morrow morning about seven o'clock; you will see me with a large basket, which will convince you of it. So, said I, thou art their factor then? Yes, replied he, the butler employs me, and one of my comrades is messenger for the steward.

Next morning at the appointed time I went to the college of St. Thomas. I was not long there till I saw my spy, with a very large basket filled with butcher's meat, poultry, and venison. I took an inventory of what the basket contained, with which I allowed the scullion to proceed; and I acquainted my master of it.

The Sicilian nobleman was of a very hasty disposition, and in the first transports would have turned off

both the steward and butler; but upon second consideration discharged only the steward, in whose place I was put; so that I soon lost my post of superintendant, which did not give me great concern, for it was only the employment of a spy, which had nothing substantial in it. Whereas by being made steward, I was master of the strong box, which is the principal thing. The steward has always the first rank amongst the domestics; and there are so many perquisites belonging to his post, that he may grow rich though he be honest.

The butler, who had not yet given over his roguery, perceiving that I was very zealous for my master, and that I determined every morning to keep an account of what victuals were bought, lest off conveying any away; but he continued taking the same quantity as usual, by the following trick. He increased the profits he had from the refuse of the table, which was his right; and this enabled him to send his mistress plenty of ready dressed victuals, if he could not send the raw meat. In short, the cunning rascal was at no loss by this reformation, and the Count saved nothing by having a phoenix of a steward. The great profusion I saw at every meal made me discover this new trick, which I put a stop to, by retrenching the superfluities of each course. This I endeavoured to do with so much prudence, that it was not perceived; there was still the appearance of great plenty, by which œconomy I greatly lessened the expences my patron wanted to retrench, without appearing less magnificent. This was what he wanted; he would keep within bounds, and yet make a grand figure. Avarice had taken hold of him, and yet he liked ostentation.

More reformation was yet necessary; the wine was consumed very fast. If the Count had twelve gentlemen dining with him, there would be fifty or sixty

flasks used. This waste amazed me, and I strongly suspected that there must be some cheat; I therefore had a conference with the scullion, as I frequently discoursed with him in private, and he informed me of all that was said or done in the kitchen, and nobody suspected him. He told me the reason of the wine going so fast was, that the butler, cook, and footmen were all combined. The footmen carried out the bottles half full, which were afterwards divided among the confederates. I took the footmen to task, and threatened to turn them away, if I found them guilty of the same practice again. This reclaimed them. I always took care to inform my master of every thing that I did for his advantage, and he loaded me with praises, growing every day more fond of me: and I made the scullion cook's assistant, in return for his intelligence.

The butler was provoked to find I had him every way; and what gave him the greatest pain, was to find himself contradicted whenever he brought his accounts. For I went to market to know the price of provisions: and when he endeavoured to impose upon me, I reprimanded him severely. I made no doubt but he poured many curses upon me; but this gave me no concern, as I knew they would have little effect. I was surprised that he remained in the Count's service, after all my persecutions; he undoubtedly found his account therein, notwithstanding all my deductions.

I frequently saw Fabricio, and told him all that passed since I was steward; but he seemed more inclined to blame my conduct than approve of it. God grant, said he, that you may meet with a reward for all your disinterestedness, but it is my opinion that it would be as well if you were not quite so hard upon the butler. What, answered I, shall the rogue charge a fish ten pistoles, which he paid only four for? Can I overlook such an

articl
half o
Reall
are v
grey
while
those
them
Fa
laugh
that
advic
and
and
three



Coun
h
9

A
mily
vant
befo
win
into
Cou
pier
and
vant
ever

article? Why may you not? said he, let him give you half of the overplus, and he will do things properly. Really, my friend, continued he, shaking his head, you are very simple, and in all appearance you will grow grey in servitude, since you will not strike the iron while it is hot. You will certainly find Fortune like those jilting coquettes who despise the gallant who uses them with ceremony.

Fabricio's conversation only diverted me; indeed he laughed at it himself, and would have persuaded me that he was only in jest, being ashamed that his bad advice had no better effect. I still remained faithful and zealous, nor had I any inclination to be otherwise: and I dare say my œconomy saved my master at least three thousand ducats in four months.



CHAP. XVI.

Count Galiano's great Concern for an Accident which happened to his Ape. Gil Blas takes ill: the Consequences of his Illness.

AN accident, which will appear very trifling to the reader, strangely disturbed the repose of the family, and turned out a very serious affair to the servants, particularly to me. Cupid, the favourite ape before mentioned, attempting one day to leap from one window to another, did it so awkwardly, that he fell into the court, and dislocated his leg. As soon as the Count was informed of this accident, he sent forth such piercing cries, that all the neighbourhood heard them; and in the excess of his grief he attacked all his servants, and was ready to turn us all out of doors. However he confined his fury to abuse, and cursed our care-

lessness. He directly sent for the most skilful surgeons. The patient's leg was set, and a bandage applied; but, though he was said to be in no danger, two of them were obliged to attend Pug, till he was quite well.

I should be blamed if I should pass over in silence the grief which the Count was in while Pug was ill. He scarce ever left him; and when he was dressed, was always present, and rose three or four times every night to see him. But the most troublesome affair was, that all the servants, and particularly myself, were obliged to be always up and ready to run for the service of Pug. In short, there was no peace in the family till the ape was quite well again, and began to play its tricks. After this we need not be scrupulous to believe the report of Suetonius, when he says that Caligula loved his horse to such a degree, that he provided for him a house elegantly furnished, with officers to attend him; and even intended to make him his consul. My master would as willingly have made Pug a corregidor, if he could.

The most unlucky circumstance for me was, that I had shewed more concern than all the other domestics, that I might get into my Lord's favour; and had fatigued myself so much in attending on Cupid, that I took ill of a fever, which increased so much, that I lost my senses, and was so ill, that I did not know what passed about me for a fortnight. However, my youth struggled so well with the fever, and perhaps with the medicines that were given me, that my understanding at length returned. The first thing I observed was, that I was not in my own room; and being desirous to know the reason, enquired of an old woman who attended me: but she desired me not to speak, for the doctor had expressly forbid it. We generally laugh at the doctors when we are in health, but when we find

ourselves

I n

I had

two f

I took

who

which

offere

me l

gentl

Th

notic

appro

if he

more

a fur

a pr

the g

face

with

a pr

ed w

scrib

V

did

min

ther

busi

in o

kno

dex

he l

his

a m

any

ourselves ill, we patiently submit to their prescriptions.

I now determined to be silent, whatever inclination I had to talk. I was busied in reflecting upon it, when two smart beaux came in, dressed in an elegant manner. I took them for noblemen of my master's acquaintance, who came to see me, out of respect for him. Upon which I endeavoured to sit up, and out of deference offered to take off my cap; but my nurse insisted on me lying down again, telling me that those worshipful gentlemen were my physician and apothecary.

The doctor came to the bed-side, felt my pulse, took notice of my looks, and perceiving all the signs of an approaching recovery, he assumed an air of triumph, as if he were greatly the means of it, saying, that one dose more would compleat the cure, which he might say was a surprising one. He ordered the apothecary to write a prescription, which while he dictated, he looked in the glass, putting his wig in order, and making such faces, that I could scarcely hold from laughing, notwithstanding I was so weak; after which he made me a profound bow, and went away, seemingly more pleased with himself, than with the medicines he had prescribed.

When the physician was gone, the apothecary, who did not come for nothing, prepared for his work, to administer——it may easily be supposed what. Whether he thought that the old woman could not do the business with dexterity, or he wanted to do it himself, in order to enhance the value of his medicine, I do not know; but I cannot tell how it happened, with all his dexterity, he had scarcely performed the operation, when he had it all returned upon him, which sadly bedaubed his fine velvet cloaths. He looked upon this accident as a misfortune common to pharmacy, and without saying any thing, took a napkin, and rubbed his cloaths, no

doubt determined to make me pay the scourer, to whom he would be obliged to send them.

Next morning he came dressed plainly, though he had nothing to fear; he brought the dose which the doctor had prescribed the day before. But besides finding myself growing better, I had contracted an aversion for doctors and apothecaries, since the day before, and even cursed the universities, where those people receive a power to kill with impunity. In this temper I swore that I would take no more medicines, and wished Hypocrites and his followers at the devil.

I immediately declared against taking any more medicines, and the apothecary went away, leaving his composition on the table. He did not care what became of it, provided he got his payment. As soon as he was gone, I had the disagreeable dose thrown over the window. I was so prepossessed against it, that I would have imagined I was poisoned had I taken it. To this piece of disobedience I added another: I positively told my nurse, that I insisted on having some accounts of my master. The old creature, either from fear lest her information should affect me too much, or from an obstinacy and desire to enrage me, made no reply; but my strong importunities at length prevailed on her to speak. Signior cavalier, replied she, Count Galiano is returned to Sicily. So you are now your own master.

Though what I heard was true, yet I could not believe my ears. That nobleman, upon the second day of my illness, through fear that I might die at his house, had me and my small affairs conveyed to a ready-furnished lodging, where he left me to the care of providence, and a nurse. In the mean time, he received an order from court to return to Sicily, for which place he set out in such haste, that he never once thought of me; whether it be that he already numbered me a

mongst the dead, or that his neglect was owing to a shortness of memory, to which people of quality are often subject.

My nurse likewise informed me, that it was she who had called the physician and apothecary, that I might not die for want of assistance. These accounts made me very thankful. I bid farewell to my hopes of an advantageous settlement in Sicily. A certain Pope says, When you meet with any great misfortune, examine yourself well, and you will discover that it is owing to yourself in some measure. But, good Mr. Pope, by your leave, I cannot see that I any way contributed to my bad fortune on this occasion.

When I found the flattering chimeras vanish that had filled my imagination, the first thing which took up my thoughts was my portmanteau, which I ordered to my bed-side, that I might examine it. Upon seeing it opened, I sighed, saying, Ah, my dear portmanteau, my only comfort! You also have lain at the mercy of strangers. The old woman exclaimed, No, Signior Gil Blas, you need not be uneasy. Nothing has been taken from your portmanteau. I have protected it as I would my own honour.

The suit of cloaths which I had when I came into the Count's service was in the portmanteau, but not that which the Messineze had ordered to be made for me. That my master had not thought proper to leave, or somebody had made free with it during my delirium. All my other things were safe, even to a leather purse, in which I kept my money. I counted it over twice, thinking it hardly possible that I should have so little remaining as fifty pistoles out of two hundred and sixty, which I had before I took ill. What is the reason of this, my good mother? said I to the nurse: my money is greatly diminished. Nobody but myself has

touch'd your money, replied the old woman, and I have been as good an œconomist of it as I possibly could. But sickness is very expensive; there is nothing to be done without money. Here, added the good woman (presenting me with a paquet of papers) is an account of all the money laid out, which is quite just. This will convince you that I have not misapplied your treasure.

I slightly glanced over the bill, which made about fifteen or twenty pages. Good heavens! what a quantity of poultry had been purchased while I was delirious! there were about twelve pistoles expended for broth alone; and the other articles were equally expensive. It is incredible to tell the sums of money laid out for candles, wood, brooms, and water. Yet, large as this account appeared, it did not amount to more than thirty pistoles; so that there should have been one hundred and eighty remaining. I represented this to the old creature; but she solemnly declared that the purse contained but fourscore pistoles when the Count's butler gave the portmanteau into her charge. What say you? interrupted I: did the butler give you the charge of these things? She replied, undoubtedly it was. By the same token when he gave me them he said, Good mother, when Signior Gil Blas is dead, let him have a genteel funeral. You will find cash enough there to pay all expences.

I exclaimed, O cursed Neapolitan, I can easily guess what has become of my money: you have kept a part of it to yourself, to make amends for the thefts I prevented you from committing. I then returned thanks to God, that the villain had not taken all. Yet, whatever reason I had to blame the steward, I also thought the nurse might have been guilty. I sometimes suspected one, sometimes the other; but it did not signi-

fy which had done it. I said nothing to the old woman; I did not even cavil at her unreasonable bill, as I could not better myself by it, and every one must live by their trade. I therefore confined my resentment to paying her off, and dismissing her at the end of three days.

I suppose she went from me immediately to the apothecary, whom she informed that she was dismissed, and that I was able to move off in his debt: for he came running quite out of breath, and presented his bill, wherein he charged many medicines he had given me while I was unsensible, under names quite unknown to me, though I had been a physician. It was really a true apothecary's bill; but he declared he would not abate one farthing. But upon recollecting that he was treating with a person who might leave Madrid suddenly, he chose rather to take what I offered, which was thrice the value of his drugs, than run the hazard of getting nothing at all. I paid him with great reluctance, and he went away very well revenged for the disgrace I made him undergo concerning the clyster.

I had almost as soon a visit from the physician. Those creatures always follow each other quickly. I satisfied him for his visits, which had been very frequent. And to prove he had earned what he got, before he left me, he gave me an account of all the mortal symptoms he had prevented in my illness. He performed this in very learned terms, and with a very genteel air; but it was too much for my comprehension. When he took himself away, I thought myself freed from all those ministers of death; a surgeon made his appearance next, whom I had never seen. He saluted me very politely, and expressed great joy at seeing me out of danger. He attributed my recovery to two plentiful bleedings performed with some cupping-glass.

ses, which he had the honour to apply. This was another time I was obliged to draw my purse strings, to make him a present. After so many evacuations, so little of the radical moisture remained in my purse, that it was little better than a lifeless corps.

When I again saw an appearance of being reduced to beggary, I began to lose courage. I had in the service of my two last masters contracted so great an affection for the conveniences of life, that I could not, as I formerly did, meet poverty like a Cynic philosopher. Yet I was very wrong to give way to sorrow, having so often found fortune raise me up, as soon as she had overthrown me. I should have looked upon the melancholy situation I was in, as the beginning of some good fortune.



THE
 ADVENTURES
 OF
 GIL BLAS
 DE SANTILLANE.

BOOK VIII.

CHAP. I.

Gil Blas meets with a good Acquaintance, and gets a Post, which makes up for Count Galiano's Ingratitude. The History of Don Valerio de Luna.

MY not hearing of Nunez all this time surprized me much, and I imagined that he was in the country. Upon which supposition, as soon as I could walk I went to his lodgings, where I learned that he was really gone to Andalusia, with the Duke de Medina Sidonia, three weeks before. When I waked one morning, I recollected Don Melchior de la Ronda; and remembring that when I was at Grenada I promised to visit his nephew, if ever I returned to Madrid, I determined to make good my promise that day. I got information where Don Balthazar de Zuniga lived, and

repaired thither, where I enquired for Signior Joseph Navarro, who came to me in a minute; but when I saluted him, he received me rather coolly, though I told him my name. I was at a loss how to look upon this distant behaviour, when I considered the character I had heard of this clerk of the kitchen; and was going to take my leave, with an intention not to pay him another visit, when he suddenly assumed a pleasant air, and said very briskly, Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, I beg you will forgive the reception I had given you: my memory betrayed my inclination. I really did not recollect that you were the person mentioned to me in a letter from Grenada about four months since.

I rejoice to see you! added he, putting his arms about me, and embracing me. My uncle Melchior, whom I esteem as my own father, intreats me, if I should be so happy as to meet with you, to treat you with as much respect as if you were his son, and to use both my friends' and my own credit for your service, if there was occasion for it. He has said such things in commendation of you, as would interest me in your welfare, though he had not particularly recommended you. I therefore desire you will look upon me as a person to whom my uncle has expressed his sentiments concerning you. I offer you my friendship, and will hope for your's.

I gratefully acknowledged Joseph's polite behaviour; and we, like people of sincerity, immediately contracted an intimacy. I made him acquainted with the situation of my affairs; which I had no sooner done, than he undertook to procure a place for me, and gave me an invitation to dine with him every day, where he told me I should fare better than at an ordinary. This offer was very welcome to a person who had just recovered from sickness, who had been accustomed to good eating,

and whose purse was low. I readily accepted of it, and in a fortnight picked up my flesh so well, that I had a face like a parson. It appeared to me that Melchior's nephew made very well for himself there; and how should it be otherwise? He had three different places at once, being steward, butler, and clerk of the kitchen; and the comptroller of the house and he were upon very good terms.

When I was quite recovered, I came in one day as usual to dinner, when my friend Joseph accosted me with a gay air, saying, Signior Gil Blas, I have a prospect of a tolerable place for you; the Duke de Lerma, first minister of Spain, intrusts two people with his own affairs, that he may devote himself entirely to those of the state. He intrusts Don Diego de Montefor with the care of gathering his rents, and Don Rodrigo de Calderona has the management of his household. These two favourites exercise their employments without any dependance on each other. Don Diego generally keeps two deputies under him, to receive the rents, and I having heard this morning that one of them was dismissed, I went to desire you might have the place. Signior de Montefor, who is my acquaintance, and whose esteem I may boast of, granted it to me, without any hesitation, upon my recommendation of you. We will go there this afternoon.

Accordingly we went. I was graciously received, and entered upon the employment of the deputy, who had been dismissed. This consisted in country business, such as visiting the farms, keeping them in repair, and receiving the rents. I gave my accompts in every month to Don Diego, who examined them attentively. This was as I wished: though my honesty had been so ill repaid by my last master, I was determined to preserve it.

We were informed one day that a fire had happened in the castle of Lerma, and that more than half of it was reduced to ashes. I immediately went to take an account of the damage: and I there got particular information of all the circumstances of the fire. I drew up an exact relation of it, which was shewn to the Duke of Lerma by Montefier. Notwithstanding the concern he was in at the accounts of such melancholy news, the relation struck him, and he made enquiry who was the author of it. Don Diego informed him, and spoke so much in my favour, that his Excellency six months after remembered me, and in what manner the story I am going to relate will inform you. If this had not happened, I might never have been employed at court. It was thus:

There lived at that time in the street of Infantas an old lady named Inesilla, whose parentage was not perfectly known: some people said that her father was a lute-maker; others, that he was a commander of the order of St. Jago. Be it as it will, she was a wonderful person; she was obliged to nature for the art of charming the men all her life, which she still enjoyed, though she was about seventy-five years of age: she had been admired by the gentlemen of the old court, and was now not less so by those of the new. Time, which spares no beauty, had in vain exercised himself upon her's: though he had made it decay insensibly, he could not deprive her of the power of pleasing: she even in old age could make conquests by her enchanting wit, her noble air, and natural graces.

A secretary of the Duke of Lerma, called Don Valerio de Luna, about twenty-five years of age, paid her a visit, and was struck with her charms: he declared his passion in the most pressing terms, and pursued his point with all the eagerness that love and youth can inspire.

The lady having reasons for not surrendering to his desires, was at a loss how to moderate his flame; at length she thought of an expedient; she took the young cavalier into her closet, and shewing him a clock, which stood upon a table, Observe, said she, what o'clock it is. At the same hour seventy-five years ago I came into the world. Do you think it suitable for one of my years to be engaged in a love-intrigue? Call back your reason, young man, and stifle such sentiments, which are so unsuitable both to you and me. At this wise advice the cavalier, who was void of the dictates of reason, answered the lady with all the impetuosity of a man possessed with the most violent emotions; Cruel Inesilla, he exclaimed, why have you recourse to such trifling excuses? Do you imagine it can make any alteration in my eyes? Do not flatter yourself with such vain hopes: whether you are what you appear to be, or a charm deceives my sight, I shall not cease to love you. She answered, Very well, since you are so obstinate as to persist in teasing me, my doors must be shut against you. I must insist upon seeing you no more.

You will probably imagine after this, that Don Valerio, confounded with what he heard, made an honourable retreat; but it was quite the reverse: he only became more importunate. Love produces the same effects in its votaries as wine does in drunkards. The cavalier begged and sighed, and making a sudden change from entreaties to rage, he would have had by force what he could not otherwise obtain: but the lady resisting with courage, exclaimed with an air of indignation, Hold, rash youth, I must curb your impious ardour: know that I am your mother.

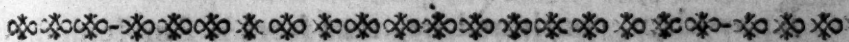
These words struck Don Valerio with amazement, and suspended his violence. But imagining that Inesilla only said so to be relieved from his solicitations,

he told her she had invented this story to elude his desires. By no means, replied she; I now discover a secret which I would have chosen for ever to conceal, had you not obliged me to discover it. Twenty-six years ago I was in love with Don Pedro de Luna, your father, who was then Governor of Segovia; and you were the fruits of our mutual passion. He owned you for his son, and had you educated with care: and besides your being his only son, your good qualities induced him to leave you an estate; and I for my part did not overlook you. As soon as I saw you appear in the world, I allured you to my house, to inspire you with that polite behaviour so necessary for a gentleman, and which the company of women only can instil into young cavaliers. I have done more; I used all my interest to have you introduced into the prime minister's service. In short, I have been as much interested for you as I ought to be for my son. After this information, take your own measures; if you can refine your sentiments, and look upon me only as a mother, I will not desire you to absent yourself, but treat you with all the tenderness I have done; but if you cannot do this, leave me this moment, and deliver me from the pain of seeing you.

Don Valerio remained silent while Inesilla spoke. He appeared as if he were recalling his virtue, and going to gain a conquest over himself: but he meditated a different design, and prepared a melancholy scene for his mother. Not being able to comfort himself for the insurmountable obstacle that opposed his happiness, he meanly yielded to his despair, drew his sword, and plunged it in his breast; and, like another Oedipus, punished himself; only with this difference, that the Theban pulled out his eyes, in regret for having consummated

the crime, and the Castilian killed himself, for grief that he could not commit it.

The unfortunate Don Valerio did not immediately die upon the spot; he had time to repent, and ask pardon of Heaven for having taken away his own life. At his death a post of secretary to the Duke of Lerma became vacant; and that minister, who had not forgot my account of the fire, and the good character he had heard of me, chose me to supply the place of this young gentleman.



CHAP. II.

Gil Blas is introduced to the Duke of Lerma, and is received into the Number of his Secretaries. He is set to Work, and the Duke is pleased with his Performance.

I Received this agreeable news from Montefier. He said, Friend Gil Blas, though I feel some regret in losing you, my regard is too great for you not to be overjoyed at your good fortune in succeeding Don Valerio. You will undoubtedly make a genteel fortune, if you take my advice in two things: the first is, to appear so firmly attached to his Excellency, that he may not doubt in the least your being entirely devoted to him; and the second is, to pay all due attention to Signior Don Rodrigo de Calderona, for he has the leading of him. If you are so fortunate as to get into the favour of that secretary, you will advance very fast.

After having returned Don Diego thanks for his good advice, Signior, said I, pray inform me of Don Rodrigo's character. I have heard him spoke of as a very bad man; but I do not pay much credit to what

people say of those who have places at court, though their reports are often too just. Therefore pray tell me your opinion of Calderona. It is a very delicate affair, said the superintendant with a malicious smile; I would not hesitate to answer this question to any other person, and tell them he is a very honest man, of undisputable character. But with you I will deal more freely, as I look upon you as a discreet young man, and think it my duty to be sincere; otherwise I should only oblige you by halves, as I have advised you to keep upon good terms with him.

Know then, continued he, that from a simple domestic of his Excellency, when he was only Don Francis de Sandoval, he has now advanced by degrees to the post of his first secretary. A prouder man was never known. He looks upon himself as the Duke of Lerma's colleague; and at bottom one would imagine he shared the authority with the prime minister, since he bestows places and governments on whom he pleases. The publick often repine at this, but it gives him no uneasiness; provided it turns out for his benefit, he despises censure. From what I have said, you may judge in what manner to behave to so haughty a creature! O very well, replied I, leave that to me. If I cannot gain his favour, I shall be very unlucky indeed. When one knows the foible of a person one has a desire to please, one must be very unsuccessful not to succeed. Then, answered he, I will introduce you to the Duke of Lerma immediately.

We went directly to the house of the minister, whom we found in a large hall, giving audience. There was more company than there is at court, consisting of commanders and knights of St. Jago and Calatrava, who were soliciting for governments and vice-royalties; bishops, who were unhealthy at their own dioceses, soli-

citing to be made archbishops, on account of the change of air; and some holy fathers of the orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis modestly desiring bishopricks. I also saw there some reformed officers, acting the same part as Chinchilla heretofore, who spent all they had in dancing attendance for a pension: if they had not their desires granted by the Duke, he however affably received their petitions, and politely answered those who spoke to him.

We waited till all these supplicants were dispatched; then Don Diego said to him, My Lord, this is Gil Blas de Santillane, that young man whom you intend should fill the place of Don Valerio. These words made the Duke look at me, who very obligingly said, I had already deserved it by the services I had done him. After this he took me into his closet, to talk privately with me, that he might judge of my understanding by my conversation. He wanted to know who I was, and how I had passed my life till then, begging an exact relation of the whole. What a task was this! I must be sincere to him; I could not lie to the prime minister: and on the other hand, I had so many things to tell at the expence of my vanity, that I could not determine upon making a general confession. How could I extricate myself from this confusion? I therefore determined to embellish the truth in those parts where the nakedness of it would give offence. But notwithstanding all my care, he saw through it, and with a smile said, Monsieur de Santillane, I see you have been a little upon the Picaroon in your time. I with blushes answered, Your Excellency desired me to be sincere, accordingly I obeyed. I am pleased with it, he replied; go, friend, you are very well off. I am surprised that you have not been ruined by bad example. Many honest people would have proved great rogues, had For-

tune put them to the same trial. Think no more of what is past. Observe now that you belong to the King, and that for the future you must be employed for him. Go with me, and I will shew you what your business is to be. He took me into a little closet next his own, where there were twenty thick folio registers upon shelves. This is where you must work, said he. These registers which you see compose a dictionary of all the nobility within the kingdoms and principalities of the Spanish monarchy: each book contains an abridgment of the history of all the gentlemen of one kingdom, in alphabetical order; also a particular account of the services performed to the state by themselves or their ancestors; with the affairs of honour they have been engaged in; their morals, fortune, and good and bad qualities: so that when they come to ask a favour, I see at once whether they are deserving of it. And that I may be truly informed of these things, I have pensioners in every place, who get good intelligence, and transmit it to me in writing. But their memorials are prolix, and full of a country dialect; they must be rendered more concise, and the language polished, because these registers are sometimes read to his Majesty.

When he had said this, he took a memorial out of a large letter-case, gave it to me, and left me at liberty to make my first essay. I read over the memorial, which appeared to be filled with harsh terms, and even passion; notwithstanding, it had been composed by a monk of Solsona. He therein unmercifully defamed a good Catalonian family; but God knows if he spoke truth. It had so much the appearance of a scandalous libel, that I was afraid to set to work upon it, for fear of making myself suspected to be an accomplice in this malicious aspersion. Yet notwithstanding I was so great a no-

vice at court, I went through it at the hazard of his Reverence's soul; and laying all the iniquity, if there was any, to his charge, I began in good Spanish to dishonour two or three generations, who perhaps were honest men.

By the time I had done four or five pages, the Duke returned, impatient to see how I went on. Santillane, said he, shew me what thou hast done. I am very desirous to see it. He began to read it very attentively, and I was agreeably surpris'd to see him appear so well pleased with it. I own, said he, much prejudiced as I was in your favour, you have exceeded my expectation: you not only write with all the clearness and exactness that I desired, but the stile also is spirited and easy: you justify the choice I have made, and console me for the loss of your predecessor. His praises of me seem'd not to be finish'd, when he was interrupted by his nephew the Count de Lemos. The manner in which he received this relation convinced me that he loved him tenderly. They withdrew together, to talk over a family affair, which I shall mention afterwards. The minister seem'd more interest'd in this at present, than in the king's business.

I heard the clock strike twelve, while they were engag'd together; and as I knew that was the hour that the clerks left their offices to go to dinner, I left my performance, and went out, not with an intention of going to Montefier's, for I had got my wages, and taken leave of him. I went to a famous ordinary at the court end of the town. A common eating-house would not now satisfy me; the Duke's saying, Remember thou now belongest to the king, often occurring to my remembrance.



CHAP. III.

Gil Blas finds that he must meet with Mortifications in his new Post; the Concern which this Intelligence gives him, and how he is obliged to alter his Conduct.

UPON my going in, I took great pains to inform the master of the house, that I was secretary to the prime minister; and in that quality was at a loss what to order for my dinner. I did not chuse to ask for any thing that appeared like good oeconomy, therefore I would not mention any thing in particular, but told him to bring what he pleased. He shewed me great respect, and regaled me sumptuously. I left a pistole upon the table, ordering what was over the reckoning to be given to the waiters, which would be at least a fourth of it. Then I walked off, with a gesture of self-applause.

There was a large house about twenty yards from thence, where foreign noblemen generally lodged. There I took an apartment, consisting of five or six rooms, genteelly furnished, as if I had been possessed of two or three thousand ducats a-year. I paid one month's rent beforehand, and then returned to my work, and continued what I had begun in the morning. In the room next to me were two more secretaries, whom the Duke employed in copying. With them I contracted an acquaintance that same night, and went with them to my tavern, where I treated them with the most delicate dishes, and wines, on purpose to gain their favour the more readily.

Our conversation had more liveliness than wit; for to do my guests justice, I soon perceived they were not

indebted to fine parts for the places they possessed: they had not got university-education, but they wrote a very good hand.

To make up for other deficiencies, they thoroughly understood their own interests; and the honour of being employed by the prime minister, did not prevent them from complaining of their situation. One said, It is now six months since we came to this employment, and have not yet received a shilling; and what is worse, we do not know upon what footing we are, as our employments are not regulated. The other said, I would readily take twenty stripes, to have the liberty of engaging myself elsewhere; for after the secrets I have been witness to, I dare neither ask to be dismissed, nor go without leave, for fear of being confined in the castle of Alicant, or the tower of Segovia.

How do you maintain yourselves then? said I; no doubt you have fortunes of your own? They replied, that they had very little, but that they lodged with a good widow, who boarded them for a hundred pistoles a year each, and gave them credit. I did not lose a word of this conversation, and it humbled my pride instantly. I could not expect that any more consideration would be had for me than for others, and consequently I should not be so transported with my post, which I did not find so substantial as I at first expected; and saw it was necessary to be as frugal of my money as I could. This cured me of my extravagance, and I repented of having treated my brother secretaries. I wished the feast at an end, and scrupled every article when the landlord brought in the bill.

It was midnight when my friends and I parted, as I did not invite them to stay longer. They returned to their widow, and I to my elegant apartment, which I now was sorry for having taken, and determined to give

it up at the end of the month. My having a good bed was of no effect, my anxiety prevented my sleeping, and I spent the remainder of the night in contriving how I might avoid serving the King for nothing. I determined to follow Montefier's advice; and rose with an intention of waiting upon Don Rodriguez de Calderona. I was in a proper disposition to appear before a man who had so much pride: but I had occasion for his protection; therefore I repaired to his secretaries, whose lodging joined to the Duke of Lerma's, and was equal to it in grandeur. It would have been difficult to distinguish the master's from the servant's, the furniture of both was so elegant.

I sent in my name, as the successor of Don Valerio: but notwithstanding that, I was an hour in the antichamber before I got admittance; during which time I said to myself, Have a little patience, good Mr. Secretary, if you please. You must dance attendance yourself, before you have other people to do so.

At last the chamber-door opened, and I going in, stepped forward to Don Rodrigo, who had just finished a billet doux to his charming Sirena, which he delivered to Pedrillo. I did not approach either the Archbishop of Grenada, Count Galiano, or the prime minister with half the respect that I did Signior Calderona. I saluted him with a profound bow, and asked his protection in such a submissive manner, that the remembrance of it makes me ashamed. My cringing behaviour would have made me appear little in the eyes of a gentleman of less pride: but it pleased him, and he obligingly assured me that he would miss no opportunity of doing me service.

I returned him thanks for his good opinion of me, and promised to be always attached to him; and for fear of being troublesome, took my leave, begging that he would forgive me, if I had interrupted him in any

affairs of consequence. After this mean behaviour, I retired to my office, and finished the work I had been set to. The Duke came next morning, and appeared as well pleased with the end as the beginning of my work, saying, It is extremely well done. He desired me to write, as well as I could, the abridgment of the Catalonian register, and then to take another memorial out of the letter-case, and digest it in the same manner. I talked some time with his Excellency, and was delighted with his easy manner. What a contrast was there betwixt him and Calderona!

I dined at a moderate expence that day at the eating-house, and resolved always to go there incog. till I saw the effect of my condescension and service. I had as much money as would serve me a quarter of a year, and determined to take my chance for that time: and as follies are best when soon ended, I resolved after that to leave the court, with all its glittering, if I got no salary in that period. For two months I spared no pains to please Calderona; but all I did was so little taken notice of, that I despaired of success: which made me alter my behaviour towards him. I no longer paid my respects to him: and therefore made the best use of the conversation which the Duke honoured me with.





C H A P. IV.

Gil Blas ingratiates himself into the Favour of the Duke of Lerma, and is intrusted with an important Secret.

NOtwithstanding the Duke of Lerma just appeared every day, and vanished again, (if I may use the expression,) I so insensibly rendered myself agreeable to his Excellency, that he one day said, Hark you, Gil Blas; I have a great opinion of your genius and disposition, and am very fond of you. You are a faithful, affectionate young fellow, discreet and intelligent; I hope I shall not repent of putting confidence in you. When he thus expressed himself, I threw myself at his feet, and respectfully kissed his hand, which he put out to raise me up. I exclaimed, Is it possible that your Excellency could deign to favour me in so extraordinary a manner? What secret enemies will your goodness get me! But I only dread the hatred of Don Rodrigo de Calderona.

There is nothing to apprehend from that quarter, answered his Grace. Calderona has been attached to me from his childhood; I know him well; and I dare say he agrees so well with me in his sentiments, that he will care for those whom I have a regard for, and hate those whom I disapprove. You may depend on his friendship, rather than dread his aversion. This made me see that Don Rodrigo was a cunning fellow, who had got into favour with his Grace, and that it would be my interest to keep fair with him. It is now time, continued the Duke, to put thee in possession of my confidence; I will disclose to thee an intention I have.

It is necessary you should be informed of it, that you may be able to acquit yourself well of the commission which you are to be employed in. It is long since my authority has been generally respected. I have had posts, employments, and governments at my disposal: I may be said to reign in Spain. I cannot push my fortune any further; but I would secure it from threatening storms: for which reason I would have my nephew the Count de Lemos to succeed me in the ministry.

His Grace perceiving that what he had said surprised me greatly, added, I see, Santillane, your amazement, that I should prefer my nephew to my son the Duke d'Uzeda. But you must be sensible that the latter has too narrow a genius to fill my place; besides, I am not his friend. He has got the method of pleasing the King, who intends to make him his favourite, and I cannot bear this. The favour of a sovereign is like the possession of a favourite woman. It is a happiness one cannot bear the thoughts of sharing with another, though connected by blood or friendship.

He added, I have now disclosed my mind to you. I have already endeavoured to stir up the King against the Duke d'Uzeda; and as my intentions have not succeeded, I have thought of another stratagem. I would have the Count de Lemos to get into the good graces of the Prince of Spain. He has an opportunity of conversing with him at all times, as he is Lord of the bed-chamber; and as he has a good deal of wit, I have a sure method of succeeding in this enterprize. By this stratagem I will set my son and nephew at variance, which will oblige them to court my assistance, and be subject to me. This, said he, is my scheme; and it is in your power to assist me. You shall be my mes-

fenger to the Count de Lemos, and shall bring me the report of all he has to say to me.

This conference made me easy, and caused me to look upon my money as sure. I said to myself, I am now in a fair way to preferment, it will shower gold upon me. The confident of a man, who is called the pillar of the Spanish monarchy, must soon be overflowing with riches. Flattering myself with these hopes, I perceived my purse grow low with great indifference.



CH A P. V.

Gil Blas meets with Joy, Honour, and Grief.

IT was soon observed that I had the prime minister's favour. He gave me publick marks of it, by causing me to carry his porto-folio, which he used to do himself when he went to council. This being unusual, made me appear to be in honour, and stirred up the envy of several people, and was the occasion of my receiving court holy-water. My two brother secretaries were not last in complimenting me upon my approaching grandeur; they gave me an invitation to sup at their widow's, not by way of making a return for my treat, but in order to get into my favour, as I might probably have it in my power to be serviceable to them. I met with congratulations from every body; even the haughty Don Rodrigo changed his behaviour. He always now called me Signior de Santillane; whereas before he called me only You, not using the term Signior. He heaped civilities on me, especially when he thought it was perceived by our patron. But I assure you he was not dealing with a fool; I returned his compliments the more politely, in that I hated him

the most: no old courtier could acquit himself better than I did in this particular.

My Lord Duke commonly went three times a-day to court, where I also attended him. He visited his Majesty in the morning before he rose, and kneeling down by his bed side, told him what was to be done that day: also directed him what was to be said, and then withdrew. After dinner he returned to amuse his Majesty with chearful conversation. He would divert him with all the pleasing adventures which happened in Madrid, of which he always had the most early intelligence. And the third visit was in the evening, to give an account of all that had passed in the day, and to get orders for the next. I staid in the anti-chamber, while he was with the King, where I was surrounded with people of quality, who were desirous of getting in-to favour, and thought themselves happy in my conversation. This must naturally make me look upon myself as a person of consequence. Many people at court imagine themselves so, who have less reason.

One day I had still more reason to be vain: the King was desirous to see a specimen of my stile, of which the Duke had spoken very advantageously. His Grace therefore desired me to take up the Catalonian register, and read before him the first story I had abridged. If I was in confusion at the presence of the prince, I was encouraged by that of the prime minister to take care of my fortune. This did not lessen my vanity; and a few days after I had a conversation with the Duke de Lemos, which made me very ambitious.

When this nobleman was at the Prince of Spain's, I waited on him from his unclè with a credential letter, wherein the Duke told him, he might look upon me as one very well acquainted with their design, and chosen as their common messenger. After the Count

had read this billet, he took me into a room, and fastening the door, said, As you are confident to the Duke of Lerma, I do not doubt but you are deserving of it, and I shall make no scruple of reposing the same trust in you. You must know then that matters go very well. The Prince of Spain distinguishes me from all the noblemen who are personally attached to him, and make it their study to please him. I had the honour of a private conference with him this morning, and he appeared much chagreened, that the King's avarice prevented him from following the dictates of his generous mind, and made him unable to spend like a prince. I took the opportunity of lamenting his misfortune. I promised to wait upon him next day at his levee with a thousand pistoles, till I could procure a larger sum. My promise delighted him, and I shall be certain of his favour, if I keep my word. Go and inform my uncle of all these circumstances, and return in the evening, to let me know what he thinks of it.

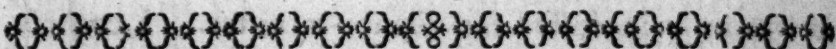
After this conversation, I left the Count de Lemos, and went to the Duke of Lerma, who, on my report, sent for a thousand pistoles from Calderona, which I was that night intrusted with. As I went, I said, I now plainly see the infallible method by which the minister will succeed in his enterprize; I think him right, and very likely he will not ruin his fortune by it. It is easily known where those pistoles come from; but it is quite reasonable that the son should be maintained by the father. When the Count de Lemos took leave of me, he whispered, Farewell, dear confident, the Prince of Spain is fond of the fair sex, we must have a conversation thereupon the first time we meet. I can perceive that I shall need your assistance soon. I went away, reflecting on these words, which were not ambiguous, and gave me great pleasure. I said to myself,

What the deuce, am I just upon the point of being made Mercury to the heir of the crown! I did not examine whether it was a good or bad office; my virtue was laid dormant by the quality of the gallant. It was a glory to me to be the minister of a great prince's pleasures. Some people will say, Softly, Mr. Gil Blas, you was only intended for deputy-minister. I confess it, but these two posts are equally honourable; they differ only in the profits.

Whilst I was employed in executing these noble commissions, every day getting more into the prime minister's favour, with these hopes I could have been very happy, if ambition could have filled my belly. I had now been two months out of my elegant lodgings, and taken a small room frugally furnished. Though this gave me some uneasiness, I bore it with patience, as I went out early in the morning, and did not return till night. All the day I appeared upon my theatre in the Duke's house, and assumed the man of consequence: but when I returned to my garret, my importance vanished, and I was only poor Gil Blas, without cash, or any thing that would raise any. I knew no person that I could discover my wants to, except Navarro; and since I became courtier, I had neglected him too much to address myself to him now. I had been under a necessity of selling my cloaths one thing after another, except some which I could not want. I left off going to the ordinary, because I could not pay. How did I then contrive to maintain myself? a small quantity of bread and wine was brought for our breakfasts at the office, and this was all that was allowed by the minister. I had nothing else the whole day, as I generally went to bed without supper.

This was the situation of a man who made a genteel appearance at court, and who deserved pity rather than

envy. However, my misery was now more than I could bear, and I resolved to open my mind to the Duke de Lerma the first good opportunity I got. I fortunately found one soon after at the Escorial, where the King and Prince of Spain went a few days after.



CH A P. VI.

The Method Gil Blas takes to inform the Duke of Lerma of his Necessity, and what Treatment he met with from him.

THE King paid all our expences while he was at the Escorial, which prevented me from feeling any wants. I lay in a wardrobe near the Duke's bed-chamber; and this minister as usual rose at break of day, desiring me to follow him into the palace garden, with paper and ink. We seated ourselves under some trees, and I, by his desire, placed myself like a man writing on the crown of his hat, while he held in his hand a paper, which he pretended to read; and we appeared at a distance to be very busy in serious matters, notwithstanding we were only conversing about trifles.

I had entertained his Excellency about an hour with all the flights my gay temper could furnish, when two magpies settled upon the trees over our heads, and were so noisy, that they drew our attention. The Duke said, those birds seem to quarrel, I should like to know the reason of it. My Lord, said I, your curiosity reminds me of an Indian fable, which I have read in Pilpay, or some other fable-writer. The minister desired to know the contents of it, which I related thus.

Formerly there was a monarch reigned in Persia, whose capacity was not sufficient to enable him to govern

his kingdom; he therefore left the management of it to his Grand Vizier, whose name was Atalmuc, a person of superior abilities. He supported the weight of this great monarchy without sinking under it, and maintained it in peace. He also had the art of causing the royal authority to be loved as well as feared, and the subjects were happy in an affectionate father, and a vizier faithful to his prince. Amongst Atalmuc's secretaries there was a young Cachemirian, called Zeangir, whom he had a greater esteem for than the other; he had great pleasure in his company, took him to the chace, and made him his confident. As they were out hunting together one day, the Vizier perceiving two ravens croaking upon a tree, said to his secretary, I would be glad to know what these birds are saying in their language. The Cachemirian replied, your wishes may be satisfied in this. In what manner? said Atalmuc. Zeangir replied, I was taught the language of birds by a cabalistical dervise; if you chuse it, I will hearken to these, and explain to you every thing they say.

The Vizier desired him to do it. Upon which the Cachemirian went near the ravens, and seemed to listen attentively to them; then he returned to the Vizier. Signior, said he, would you imagine that we were the subject of their conversation? Is it possible? said the minister. And what do they say of us? The secretary replied, One of them says, Observe the Grand Vizier, that tutelary eagle, that spreads his wings over all Persia, and watches continually for its preservation. He is come with his faithful Zeangir, to divert himself after his labours. That secretary is happy in serving a master who is so fond of him. Hold, says the other raven, do not talk so much of the secretary's good fortune. Notwithstanding Atalmuc talks familiarly with him, makes him his confident, and probably intends to

give him some considerable post; before that happens he will be starved with hunger. That poor creature lodges in a shabby room, in want of the necessaries of life. In short, he lives wretchedly, unknown to every body at court. The Grand Vizier makes no inquiry into his circumstances, but being satisfied with having a regard for him, he must fall a victim to poverty.

I stopped, to hear how the Duke took it; he smiling asked me, what impression this fable made upon Atalmuc's mind, and if the secretary's forwardness did not give offence to the Grand Vizier. I answered in confusion, No, my Lord, the fable says he heaped favours upon him. That was very lucky, answered the Duke seriously; but some ministers would not take this well. He rose up, breaking off the discourse, and said, he imagined the King would soon be awake, and it was his duty to attend him. Then he went quickly away, without saying any more; and I imagined he was not well pleased with the Indian fable.

I followed him quite to the door of his Majesty's bed-chamber, and then went to lay by my papers in their place. Then I went to the two secretaries, who were at work. Upon seeing me, they said, What is the matter, Signior de Santillane? has any thing disagreeable happened to you?

I could not conceal my uneasiness, I was so much affected. I told them all that had passed between the Duke and I, and they appeared sensible of my grief. You have very good reason to be vexed: I wish you may be better treated than the secretary of Cardinal Spinosa, who had been fifteen months there, and received nothing. One day he made free to mention his necessities to his Eminence, and desired some money. It is reasonable said the minister, that you should be

paid: here is an order for a thousand ducats for you, go and receive that sum from the royal treasury; but I shall have no more occasion for you. The secretary would have been comforted; if he had received the thousand ducats, and been at liberty to look for business elsewhere: but alas! immediately upon his leaving the Cardinal's house, he was arrested by an alguazil, and taken to the tower of Segovia, where he was long under confinement. My fear was greatly increased by this affair, and I looked upon myself as undone. I was quite inconsolable, and reproached my own impatience, as if I had not suffered enough. Oh! said I, why did I run the hazard of displeasing the minister by this unlucky fable, when he might possibly be on the point of relieving me out of this disagreeable situation? I might perhaps have been near making one of those sudden fortunes which surprise the world. Probably I have lost riches and honour by my folly. I should have considered that great men dislike to be anticipated, and chuse that the smallest gratifications they give should be esteemed as a free gift. I had better continued my spare diet, without complaining; and if I had starved, the blame would have laid on his side.

If any sparks of hope had remained, the appearance of my master, who came in in the afternoon, would have banished them: contrary to his usual custom, he was very grave, and hardly spoke. This made me quite uneasy all the day after, and I spent the night in great disquiet. My distress at seeing my gay visions all disappear, and the fear of encreasing the number of state prisoners, kept me awake till morning.

The next day was to determine my fate; the Duke ordered me to attend, which I did, trembling with all the fear of a guilty criminal. Santillane, said he, holding out a paper which he had in his hand, take this

warrant——The word warrant made me tremble. I secretly exclaimed, O Heavens! here is the cardinal Spinosa, the carriage is ready for Segovia. The terror I was in, prompted me to interrupt my master, and fall at his feet. I was all in tears, and said, I most humbly intreat that your Excellency would forgive my presumption. Necessity obliged me to disclose my situation to you.

The Duke could not forbear laughing at my uneasiness, and said, Compose yourself, Gil Blas, and attend to what I am going to say. My friend, I am not disobliged, notwithstanding your complaint was a reproach on me, for not having prevented your necessities; yet, my friend, I do not take it amiss; I rather blame myself, for not having enquired how you lived. But to make up for my inattention, here is a warrant for fifteen hundred ducats, to be paid out of the royal treasury on demand: this sum I shall continue annually; and besides, you shall have a power to speak in the behalf of people of wealth and generosity, when they solicit thy interest.

These words occasioned such an extacy, that I fell down, and kissed the minister's feet. He desired me to rise, and continued talking in a familiar way. I would gladly have recovered my chearfulness, but was not able to make a transition from grief to joy so soon. I had the appearance of a criminal, who hears he has got a reprieve just when he expected the fatal blow. My master imagined my confusion was occasioned by the fear of incurring his displeasure, but the terror of a perpetual imprisonment had a great share in it. He owned that he had shewed a coolness in his behaviour, to see whether the change affected me; and he was now convinced of my being sincerely attached to him, which induced him to regard me the more.

C H A P. VII.

The good Use he made of his 1500 Ducats; the first Affair in which he was engaged; and the Profits arising from thence.

THE King returned to Madrid next day, as if he had intended to gratify my impatience. I went directly to the royal treasury, where I received the sum mentioned in my order. I now attended to nothing but my ambition and vanity. I left my miserable lodging for the secretaries, who are unacquainted with the language of birds, and took my elegant apartment again, which very luckily was still empty. I sent for a noted tailor, who was generally employed by all the beaux. He took my measure, and carried me to a cloathier's shop, where he took off five ells of cloth, which he said was as little as he could take to make me a suit. Five ells for a suit in the Spanish fashion! Heavens! But we must be a little favourable. Reputable tailors always use more than others. I then made a purchase of some linen, silk stockings, and a beaver hat, laced with an open Spanish lace.

After all this I thought it was necessary for me to have a footman; and therefore desired Vincent Forero, my landlord, to recommend one to me. Strangers generally hire Spanish servants upon their arrival at Madrid, which draws all the servants who are out of place to his house. The first who offered himself was a young man who appeared mild and religious, who did not please me, as he was so like Ambrose de Lamela. I told Forero that I did not want a valet with such a religious air, having been bit by such an one before.

Just as I had dismissed this fellow, another was introduced, very sprightly and young, who had as much impudence as a court page, and seemed a little roguish. His appearance pleased me; I put some questions to him, which he answered sharply. I saw he was of an intriguing disposition, and looked upon him as a proper man for my purpose; therefore I immediately engaged him, which I had no reason to repent, for I soon perceived, that I had got an admirable bargain. As the Duke had given me leave to speak to him in favour of persons whom I was willing to oblige, and as I had no intention to neglect this permission, I wanted a spaniel to hunt out the game; I mean an arch fellow, that was vigilant, and fit to find out and bring me such persons as had favours to ask of the prime-minister. This was just Scipio's masterpiece: so my footman was called: he came from Donna Anna de Guevara, the Prince of Spain's nurse, where he had made great use of that talent.

No sooner had I informed him of my interest, and that I should be glad to make use of it, than he took the field, and that very day he told me: Sir, I have made a pretty good discovery. A young gentleman of Grenada, called Don Roger de Rada, is just come to this city, who has fought a duel, which obliges him to have recourse to the Duke of Lerma's protection; and he is willing to pay well for doing him that service. I have spoken to him. He was going to address himself to Don Rodrigo de Calderona, whose power he has heard much talked of; but I have prevented him, by telling him, that the secretary sold his good offices at an extravagant rate, whereas you would be satisfied with a handsome acknowledgment for yours; that you would even do a service for nothing, if the state of your affairs would permit you to follow your generous and disinte-

rested temper. In short, I have said so much to him in your favour, that you will see the gentleman at your levee to-morrow morning. How, said I, Mr. Scipio, you have already done wonders: you are no novice at intriguing. I am surpris'd you are no richer. That ought not to amaze you, replied he; I love to make money circulate, I am no miser.

Accordingly Don Roger de Rada appeared next morning, and was received with a politeness intermixed with haughtiness. Signior Cavalier, said I, before I engage to serve you, I must be informed of the affair of honour that is the occasion of your coming to court; for it may happen to be of that nature, that I may not dare to speak in your behalf to the prime minister. Therefore I desire you to relate it faithfully to me, and be assured, that I will espouse your interest very heartily, if a man of honour may appear therein. I shall willingly grant your request, answered the young Grenadian. Upon which he made the following sincere recital of his adventures.

C H A P. VIII.

The History of Don Roger de Rada.

IN the city of Antequera lived a Grenadian gentleman, called Don Anastasio de Rada, with his wife Donna Estephania, who, with solid virtue, had a mild temper, and was very beautiful. If she loved her husband affectionately, it was returned with equal passion. He was naturally very jealous; and although he had no reason to suspect his wife's fidelity, he was nevertheless uneasy. He was afraid lest some private enemy to his repose should make an attempt upon his ho-

nour. He became distrustful of all his friends except Don Huberto de Hordales, to whom his house was open, as being Estephania's cousin, and who was the only one in whom he could put any confidence.

However, Don Huberto became enamoured of his cousin, and was so bold as to declare his passion, without having regard to the blood that united them, or to Don Anastasio's particular friendship. The lady, who was discreet, instead of raising an uproar, which might have had fatal consequences, gently reproved him, representing to him the heinousness of the crime, to attempt to seduce her and dishonour her husband; and telling him very seriously, that he ought not to flatter himself with the least hopes of succeeding in his design.

The cavalier became the more inflamed by this moderation; for imagining, that he ought to try a woman of her character to the utmost, he began to be disrespectful in his behaviour, and had the boldness one day to press her to satisfy his desires. She haughtily repulsed him with a severe air, and threatened to make her husband punish his rashness. The spark, being terrified with her threats, promised to talk no more to her of love: and, upon the credit of this promise, Estephania entirely forgave him for his past misbehaviour.

Don Huberto, who was naturally base at the heart, could not see his passion so ill repaid, without conceiving a base desire of avenging himself. He knew Don Anastasio to be very jealous, susceptible of any impression he could make upon him. He wanted no more to form the most treacherous design of which a worthless villain could be capable. One evening, as he was walking alone with this weak husband, he thus seriously addressed him: My dear friend, I can live no longer without revealing a secret, which I should be cautious of discovering, if your honour were not more dear to

you than your rest. But your delicacy and mine in point of offences, will not allow me to conceal any longer what is carried on at your house. Prepare to hear an account which will make you no less surprised than sorry. I am going to wound you in your tenderest part.

I have a pretty good guess of what you are going to tell me, replied Don Anastasio, already quite confounded, your cousin is false to me. I no longer acknowledge her for my cousin, rejoined Hordales, with a passionate air; I disown her, and she is unworthy of having you for her husband. You make me languish too long, cried Don Anastasio, speak, of what has Estephania been guilty? She has betrayed you, replied Don Huberto. You have a rival whom she admits secretly into your house, but I cannot name him to you; for the adulterer escaped the eyes that watched him, by the favour of a dark night. All that I know is, that they deceive you, and of that I am very well assured. The interest that I ought to take in this affair is but too certain a proof for you of the veracity of my report. If I had not been well convinced of Estephania's infidelity, I should never have declared myself against her.

I need not, continued he, observing that his discourse produced the desired effect, I need not say any more to you. I perceive, that you are undeserving of the ingratitude wherewith your love is repaid, and that you are meditating a just revenge. I shall not oppose you: do not examine who is the victim you are going to punish; shew the whole city, that there is nothing but what you can sacrifice to your honour.

In this manner did the traitor animate a too credulous husband against an innocent wife; and he painted to him in such strong colours the infamy wherewith he would be covered, if he let the affront go unpunished,

that at last he highly incensed him. Don Anastasio is now quite deprived of judgment, and seems as if possessed by the furies. He returns home fully resolved to murder his unhappy wife, who was just stepping into bed when he arrived.

He bridled his passion at first, and waited till the servants were withdrawn. But then, without being restrained by the fear of the anger of Heaven, or the dishonour that it would reflect upon an honest family; or even by the natural pity he ought to have had for a child, wherewith his wife was six months gone; he drew near his victim, and said in a furious tone: Wretch, thou must perish; thou hast but one moment longer to live, and that is owing to my goodness, that thou mayest beg Heaven to forgive thee the heinous crime thou hast been guilty of towards me. I would not have thee lose thy soul, as thou hast lost thine honour.

Thus saying, he drew his poinard. His action and discourse frightened Estephania; so that throwing herself at his knees, wringing her hands, and quite confounded, she said, What is the matter, my Lord; What have I been so unhappy as to do to make you dissatisfied? Why would you deprive your spouse of her life? If you suspect her of being faithless to you, you are very much deceived.

No, no, replied the jealous wretch, I am but too well assured of your treachery. My informer, Don Huberto, is a worthy person.—Ah, my Lord! said she, interrupting him with precipitation, you ought to put no confidence in Don Huberto: he is less your friend than you imagine. If he has told you any thing reflecting upon my virtue, do not believe him. Hold your tongue, base woman, replied Don Anastasio; by endeavouring to prepossess me against Hordales, you

rather justify than remove my suspicions. You attempt to render me mistrustful of this relation, because he knows your treachery. You would weaken his evidence, but this artifice is in vain, and redoubles my inclination to punish you. My dear husband, cried Estephania weeping bitterly, be upon your guard against your blind passion, whose dictates if you follow, you will never forgive yourself, when you shall once be made sensible of the injustice you do me. For God's sake calm your anger; at least take time to clear up your suspicions. It will only be acting justly towards a woman, who has nothing wherewith to reproach herself.

Any other but Don Anastasio would have been affected by these words, and yet more by the affliction of the person who pronounced them; but the obdurate wretch, far from seeming to relent, bid the lady a second time recommend herself to God speedily; and even raised his arm to strike her. Stop, barbarian, cried she. If your former love for me is entirely extinct; if all the marks of tenderness, of which I have been so profuse, are blotted out of your remembrance: if my tears cannot prevent you from putting in execution your execrable design, at least have regard for your own blood. Do not arm your furious hand against an innocent, who has not yet seen the light. You cannot be its executioner without offending both heaven and earth. As for me, I forgive you my death, but doubt not that his will cry for justice for so horrible a crime.

As resolute as Don Anastasio was, not to hearken to whatever Estephania should say, he could not help being moved at the dreadful ideas which these last words excited in his mind. Accordingly, as if he was afraid lest this shock should get the better of his resentment, he made haste to take advantage of what fury remain-

ed in him, and plunged his poinard into his wife's left side. She immediately fell down, and he, imagining her dead, left his house, and fled from Antequera that moment.

In the mean while this unfortunate spouse was so stunned with the wound she had received, that she remained some minutes lifeless upon the ground. After which, recovering her spirits, she made such complaints and lamentations as drew an old woman, that served her, to her assistance. This good old creature seeing her mistress in so deplorable a condition, sent forth such cries, as soon awakened the other servants, and even the next neighbours. The chamber was soon full of company. They sent for surgeons, who examining the wound, had no ill opinion of it. They were not mistaken in their conjectures. Estephania was even speedily cured, and delivered happily of a son three months after this adventure. And in me, Signior Gil Blas, you behold that son; I am the fruits of that unhappy labour.

Although slander seldom pays regard to a woman's character, it yet shewed a regard to my mother's; and this bloody scene was looked upon in the town but only as the transport of a jealous husband. It is true my father was known to be of a violent temper, and apt easily to be enraged at any thing. Hordales judged very rightly, that his cousin suspected him of having disturbed Don Anastasio's mind by his falsities, and satisfying himself with being at least half revenged of her, he left off visiting her. I shall not enlarge upon my education, lest I tire your patience; I shall only say, that my mother chiefly took care of my learning to fence well, and that I pushed a long time in the most celebrated schools of Grenada and Seville. She impatiently waited till I was of age to measure my sword

with Don Huberto, that she might inform me what reason she had to complain of him; and finding me at last in my eighteenth year, she intrusted me with it, not without shedding a flood of tears, and being sensibly affected. What impression cannot a mother make in this condition upon a son, who has courage and natural affection? I immediately went in search of Hordales, and carried him to a private place, where, after a pretty long combat, I ran him thrice through, and left him upon the spot.

Don Huberto feeling himself mortally wounded, fixed his dying eyes upon me, and confessed, that he had received death at my hands as a just punishment for the offence he had committed against my mother's honour. He owned, that he had resolved to ruin her, to revenge himself of her rigour. After this he breathed his last; asking pardon of heaven, Don Anastasio, Estephania, and me. I did not think it proper to return home, to inform my mother of the issue. I left that to fate. I crossed the mountains, and went to Malaga, where I went on board a privateer, who was going to cruize. I seemed to him not to want courage, and he consented willingly to my joining with the brave fellows he had on board.

We soon found an occasion to signalize ourselves. We met, near the isle of Albouran, a corsair of Melilla; who was returning to the coast of Africa, with a Spanish vessel, richly laden, which he had taken not far from Carthagen. We attacked the African briskly, and made ourselves masters of his two ships, wherein were fourscore Christians, whom he was carrying slaves to Barbary. Then taking advantage of a gale, that sprung up, and was for the coasts of Grenada, we were not long in arriving at Punta de Helena.

As we inquired of the slaves we had delivered of

what place they were, I asked the same question of a man of an excellent mien, and who seemed to be about fifty years old. He replied sighing, that he was of Antequera. His answer affected me, without knowing any reason for it; and my emotion, which he perceived, caused a disturbance in him, which I could not avoid observing. I am, says I to him, your fellow citizen. May I be so bold as to ask the name of your family? Alas! replied he, you renew my grief, by desiring me to satisfy your curiosity. It is eighteen years since I quitted Antequera, where I ought only to be remembered with detestation. Perhaps you have yourself only heard me too much talked of. I am called Don Anastasio de Rada. Good Heaven! exclaimed I, may I believe what I hear? What, is it Don Anastasio, is it my father who stands before me? What do you say, young man? cried he in his turn, observing me with surprise, is it possible? can you be that unfortunate child with whom your mother was big, when I sacrificed her to my fury? Yes, father, said I, it was me that the virtuous Estephania brought into the world, a quarter of a year after that fatal night wherein you left her weltering in her blood.

Not waiting to hear any more, Don Anastasio threw himself about my neck. He embraced me in his arms, and we did nothing but intermingle our sighs and tears for a quarter of an hour. Having giving ourselves up to the tender emotions which such an interview could not but excite in us, my father raised his eyes to heaven, to return thanks for the deliverance of Estephania; but the moment after, as if he had been afraid his thanks were unreasonable, he enquired of me how his wife's innocence had been discovered. My Lord, said I, nobody but yourself ever had the least doubt of it. Your spouse's conduct has always been irreproachable. Know

then that you were disabused: it was Don Huberto who imposed upon you. At the same time I told him of that relation's perfidiousness, how I had been revenged, and what was his confession to me at his death.

The joy of my father was greater at hearing such news, than at having recovered his liberty. He began again eagerly to embrace me, and was never tired of expressing how well he was pleased with me. Come, my son, said he, let us immediately take the road to Antequera. I burn with impatience to throw myself at the feet of a wife whom I have used so basely. Since you have let me know the wrong I have done her, my heart bleeds with remorse.

I longed too eagerly to bring again together two persons so dear to me, to defer the happy minute. I left the privateer, and bought at Adra two mules, with the money I received for my part of the prize, my father being no longer willing to expose himself to the dangers of the sea. He had leisure enough upon the road to relate to me all his adventures, to which I listened with the same eager attention which Telemachus gave to Ulysses when reciting his. In short, after several days journey, we reached the bottom of the mountain next to Antequera, where we halted. As we intended to get home as privately as possible, we did not enter the city till midnight.

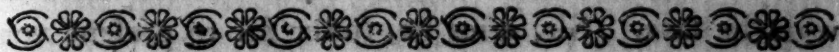
I leave you to imagine my mother's amazement at beholding a husband whom she thought lost for ever; and the miraculous manner, if I may use that expression, that he was restored to her, was another subject for her wonder. He begged her forgiveness for his barbarity, with such lively marks of repentance, that she could not resist his intreaties. Instead of looking on him as an assassin, she only regarded him as a man to whom heaven had subjected her. So much does a virtuous woman revere the name of husband.

My mother had been so much troubled for my safety, that she was charmed at my return. Nevertheless her joy was not lasting; a sister of Hordales took out a criminal process against her brother's murderer, and had me pursued every where. So that Esteophania, finding I was not safe in our house, was very uneasy. This obliged me to set out for court that very night, whither I am come, Sir, to solicit my pardon, which I have not the least fear of obtaining, since you are willing to speak in my behalf to the first minister, and make use of all your interest.

Don Anastasio's worthy son having thus recited his story, I said to him with an air of importance, It is enough, Signior Don Roger, your case seems pardonable. I take upon me to give his Excellency an account of your affair, and dare venture to promise you his protection. The Grenadian upon that paid me a vast number of compliments, which had only gone in at one ear and out at the other, if he had not assured me, that his acknowledgment should immediately follow the service I should do. But as soon as he had touched upon that string, I set about it in earnest. I informed the Duke of the whole matter that very day, who having permitted me to present the cavalier to him, said: Don Roger, I am apprised of the affair that has brought you to court; Santillane has told me all the circumstances. Be not uneasy, you have done nothing but what is pardonable; his Majesty loves, particularly, to forgive such gentlemen as revenge their offended honour. You must go to prison for form; but be assured, that you shall stay but a very short time there. Santillane is your good friend, and shall take care of the rest. He shall hasten your enlargement.

Don Roger made a low bow to the minister, upon

whose word he surrendered himself prisoner. His pardon was soon dispatched by my care, and in less than ten days I sent this new son of Ulysses to rejoin his father and mother; whereas if he had not had a protector, perhaps he might have remained a twelvemonth in prison. I had for this no more than an hundred pistoles; it was no great catch, but I did not despise trifles, like Calderona.



CHAP. IX.

How Gil Blas made an immense Fortune in a short Time; and what great Airs he gave himself.

I GREW fonder of the business after this affair; and ten pistoles which I gave to Scipio for brokerage, encouraged him to go anew upon the scent. I have already greatly commended his talent at it; one might justly have called him Scipio the Great. The second chapman he brought me was a printer of books of chivalry, who had enriched himself in defiance of good sense. This printer had pirated another's copy, and his edition had been seized. For three hundred ducats, I had his books restored again to him, and saved him a heavy fine. Although this did not belong to the first minister, his Excellency, at my desire, was willing to interpose his authority. After the printer, a merchant fell into my clutches, and upon the following account: A Portuguese vessel had been taken by a corsair of Barbary, and was retaken by a privateer of Cadiz. Two thirds of her lading belonged to a Lisbon merchant, who having often reclaimed it without the least effect, was come to the court of Spain, to find a protector who had interest enough to get it restored.

I stepped forth in his behalf, and he regained his effects, upon paying four hundred pistoles, whereof he made me a present for the protection.

Methinks I hear a reader cry at this place, Courage, Santillane, put hay in your coach-box, you are in a fine road, push your fortune. Oh! be not in the least afraid of that. If I am not mistaken I see my footman coming with a new customer, whom he has just hooked in. It is just as I thought, here he is. Let us hear what he says. Sir, cries he, suffer me to present you this celebrated operator. He desires a patent for selling his drugs for ten years through all the cities of Spain, exclusive of all others; that is to say, that all persons of his profession may be prohibited settling in the places where he resides, and he will, as an acknowledgment, give two hundred pistoles to the person that gets the patent dispatched. I told the mountebank, protector like, Go your ways, friend, I will stand your friend. In effect, a few days after I sent him back with a patent that gave him an exclusive power to deceive the people through all the kingdoms of Spain.

Besides my growing more covetous, in proportion as I became richer, I had obtained these four favours so easily of his Excellency, that I made not the least hesitation to ask a fifth. It was the government of the city of Vera, on the coast of Grenada, for a knight of Calatrava, who offered me a 1000 pistoles. The minister fell a laughing to see me so keen after the game.

Good God, friend Gil Blas, said he, after what rate you go on! You take great pleasure in obliging your neighbours. Hearken, when you ask only for trifles, I shall not observe you so narrowly; but when you want governments, or other considerable things, half the profit, if you please, must content you. You shall be accountable to me for the other. You cannot imagine,

continued he, at what expence I am forced to be, nor to how many shifts I am put to live agreeably to my honourable post; for, notwithstanding the disinterestedness I put on to the eyes of the world, I own to you I am not fool enough to confound my domestic affairs. Depend upon that.

This discourse of the prime minister taking away all fear of importuning him, or rather encouraging me to make more frequent demands, rendered me yet more greedy of riches than I was before. I should then willingly have advertised that all those who wanted any favours at court, should apply to me. I went one way, Scipio another, seeking only how to do any one a service for his money. My knight of Calatrava had the government of Vera for his thousand pistoles, and I soon obtained another at the same price for a knight of St. Jago. The making of governors did not satisfy me, I also bestowed orders of knighthood, and converted some good yeomen into bad gentlemen, by excellent coats of arms. I was also willing the clergy should be sensible of my benefits, and conferred some small benefices, made canons, and some other dignities of the church. As to archbishoprics and bishoprics, Don Rodrigo de Calderona was the patron that bestowed them. He also had the naming of magistrates, commanderies, and viceroyalties. By which I imagine, that the great places were as badly filled as the small ones. For the persons whom we chose to fill the posts, whereof we made such a pretty traffick, were not always the most able men in the world, nor the most regular. We were not ignorant that the sneerers at Madrid made themselves merry thereupon at our expence; but we resembled the misers, who comfort themselves for the ridicule of the populace, by looking at their gold.

Ifocrates makes a very just remark, when he calls intemperance and folly the inseparable companions of riches. When I saw myself master of thirty thousand ducats, and in a way perhaps to get ten times as much, I thought myself obliged to make a figure suitable to the confident of the first minister. I hired a whole house, which I furnished genteelly. I bought the coach of an Escrivano, who had set it up out of ostentation, and who wanted to part with it by the advice of his baker. I hired a coachman, with three footmen, and, as it is but reasonable to promote one's old domestics, I advanced Scipio to the threefold honour of being my valet de chambre, secretary, and steward. But what raised my pride to the greatest pitch was, that the minister thought fit for my men to wear his livery. The little remainder of sense I had left now fled. I was full as mad as the disciples of Porcius Latro, who having, by drinking cummin, made themselves as pale as their master, imagined themselves as learned as he; I was within a little of imagining myself a relation of the Duke of Lerma's, at least I thought I should pass for such, or for one of his bastards, which made no small addition to my pride.

I also resolved to keep an open table, following my master's example, who kept open house. For which purpose I ordered Scipio to provide me a good cook, and he found me one, who perhaps was not inferior to that of Nomentatus of dainty memory. I filled my cellar with delicious wines, and having laid in my other stores, I began to receive company. Every night I had some of the head-clerks of the minister's offices to sup with me, who haughtily took upon them the quality of secretaries of state. On the other hand, Scipio (for like master like man) had also his table in the buttery, where he made his acquaintance merry at

my expence. But besides my loving this fellow, as he contributed to my getting money, he seemed entitled to help me to spend it. Add to that, I viewed this waste with the eyes of a young man. I did not see the hurt it did me. The benefices and other employments continued to bring grist to my mill. I saw my treasury increase daily; I imagined that for this time I had fixed a nail in fortune's wheel.

I now wanted nothing to compleat my vanity but to have Fabricio a witness of my splendid living. I did not doubt but he was returned from Andalusia, and that I might have the pleasure of surprizing him, I sent him an anonymous letter, wherein I informed him, that a nobleman of Sicily, who was his friend, expected him at supper. I appointed the day, the hour, and the place of rendezvous, which was at my house. Nunez came, and was not a little astonished to find that I was the strange nobleman who had invited him to supper. Yes, friend, said I to him, This house belongs to me, I have an equipage and good table, and, what is more, a strong box. Is it possible, cried he out briskly, that you are again become rich? What pleasure it gives me for having placed you with Count Galiano! I said he was a generous nobleman, and would soon make you easy in your circumstances. Undoubtedly, added he, you have followed the good counsel I gave you, not to look too sharp after the steward. I congratulate you upon it. It is only by this conduct that the comptrollers pick up so much in great houses.

I let Fabricio applaud himself as long as he pleased, for having recommended me to Count Galiano. After which, to moderate his joy for having procured me so good a post, I told him the marks of gratitude wherewith that nobleman had repaid my services. But perceiving that my poet, during this relation, sung a re-

exultation within himself, I said, I forgive the Sicilian his ingratitude. Upon my soul I have more reason to congratulate myself than complain. If the Count had not treated me badly, I had followed him into Sicily, where I should still have served him, in expectation of an uncertain settlement: in a word, I should not have been the Duke of Lerma's confident.

These last words so confounded Nunez, that he stood speechless for some time. Then suddenly breaking silence: May I believe my own ears? said he. What, are you intrusted with the prime minister's secrets? I share his confidence, replied I, with Don Rodrigo de Calderona, and, according to all appearances, I shall go a great way. Indeed, Signior de Santillane, rejoined he, I admire you. No employment comes wrong to you. What talents! You have (to use an expression of us poets), you have the Universal Tool, that is to say, you can discharge all sorts of employments. As for the rest, my Lord, continued he, I am overjoyed at your Lordship's prosperity. Hold, hold, said I, interrupting him, Monsieur Nunez, have done with your my Lord, and your Lordship; let us banish those terms, and live always familiarly together. You are in the right, replied he; I ought still to look upon you with the same eye as formerly, though you are become rich. I will confess my weakness; I was dazzled at hearing of your good fortune; but the mist is vanished, and now my friend Gil Blas appears before me.

Some clerks now coming in, interrupted our conversation: Gentlemen, said I, presenting Nunez to them, you shall sup with Signior Don Fabricio, who makes verses worthy of King* Numa, and writes in

* Numa composed the obscure verses which the Salian priests sung in their processions.

prose in a manner equal to himself alone. As ill luck would have it, I spoke to persons who cared so little for poetry, that the poet suffered for it. They hardly deigned to cast their eyes on him. He in vain repeated several fine things to draw their attention, they had no taste for them. This so much incensed him, that he took a poetical licence, he got slyly out of the company, and disappeared. Our clerks did not perceive his retiring, but sat down to table even without enquiring what was become of him.

Next morning as I had just ended with dressing me, and was going out, the Asturian poet appeared. I ask your pardon, friend, said he, if I disobliged your clerks; but, to be ingenuous, I was so much out of my element, that I could not stay. What haughty wretches, with their conceited stiff looks! I cannot imagine how you, who have so bright a genius, can suit yourself to such dull company. To-night, continued he, I will introduce some to you of a better taste. You will oblige me therein, replied I, and I depend upon your judgment. You are in the right, rejoined he; I promise you some of the brightest and most diverting parts. I am going directly to a chocolate-house, where they will soon meet, I will bespeak them, for fear they should be engaged elsewhere; for every one strives who shall have them at their houses, they are such agreeable and diverting companions.

Thus saying, he withdrew, and at night at supper-time he came only accompanied with six authors, whom he presented to me one after another, making their respective encomiums. Take his word for it, these wits surpassed the most celebrated Grecian and Italian writers, and their works (as he said) deserved to be written in letters of gold. I received the gentlemen very politely, and even affected to overwhelm them

with civility, for these kind of people are a little vain and conceited. Although I had not ordered Scipio to provide a good supper, yet, as he knew what sort of people I was to treat, he had made an addition to each course.

In short, we sat down to table in very good humour. My poets began to praise and cry up themselves. One, with a haughty air, repeated the names of the great lords and women of quality who were ravished with his muse. Another blaming the choice that an academy of learned men had just made of two members, said very modestly, that they should have chosen him. The discourse of the others was not less presuming. In the middle of supper they stunned me with their verse and prose. Every one round began to recite a specimen of his writings. One repeats a sonnet, another a scene of a tragedy; a third reads a criticism upon a comedy. A fourth being desirous in his turn to rehearse an ode of Anacreon, translated into wretched Spanish verse, was interrupted by one of his brethren, who tells him he has made use of an improper term. The author of the version will not agree to it. Thence arises a dispute, wherein all the wits engage. They are divided in their opinions, the disputants become enraged, they fall to invectives; as to that it was tolerable, but the furious madmen rise from table, and fall to boxing. It was no easy matter for Fabricio, Scipio, my coachman, footmen, and myself to part them; which as soon as we had done, they retired as if it had been from a tavern, without making me the least excuse for their bad behaviour.

Nunez, upon whose word I had promised myself to spend the evening very agreeably, knew not what to say at this adventure. Well, says I, friend, will you again cry up your guests? Faith, I am but little obli-

ged to you for your fine geniuses. For my part, I will keep to my clerks, speak no more to me of authors. I shall not trouble you with the company of any more of them, replied he, as those you have had are more reasonable than any of the others.



C H A P. X.

Gil Blas becomes quite corrupted at Court. What Commission the Count de Lemos intrusts him with; and how that Nobleman and he engaged themselves in an Intrigue.

EVERY body knowing that I was the Duke of Lerma's favourite, vast numbers came to make their court to me. As soon as I arose, my anti-chamber was crouded with suppliants, to whom I gave audience at my levee. These consisted of two sorts. The one solicited my interest for them with the prime-minister, for which they were willing to gratify me; the others endeavoured to induce me by their supplications and prayers to obtain what they desired gratis. I gave the first a favourable reception, and served them genteelly. As for the second, I either got rid of them immediately by evasions and pretences, or amused them so long that I made them lose their patience. Before I became a courtier, I was naturally charitable; but when one is once become one, there is no longer any regard paid to humanity, and I became as hard as a flint. Consequently as I was cured of my sensibility for my friends, I put off all affection for them. The usage I gave Joseph Navarro, in a juncture which I am going to relate, will confirm it.

I was greatly obliged to this Navarro, and he, I may

justly say, was the first cause of my fortune. He came to me one day, and expressing great friendship whenever he saw me, he intreated me to ask a certain employment of the Duke de Lerma, telling me that the cavalier in whose behalf he spoke was a young gentleman of great worth and merit, but that he was in need of a post whereon to subsist. I have not the least doubt, continued he, but as I know you to be obliging and good-humoured, you will gladly do a service to an honest gentleman who is not overflowing with money. I am sure you will thank me for giving you an opportunity to exercise your generous temper. This was telling me plainly that this piece of service was expected for nothing. Although this was not at all to my relish, I nevertheless seemed entirely disposed to grant his request. I am overjoyed, replied I to Navarro, that I am able to give you a proof how grateful I am for all you have done for me. It is enough that you make interest for any one; that is sufficient to determine me to serve him. You may depend upon your friend's receiving the employment he desires; I take the affair entirely upon myself.

Joseph went away very well satisfied upon this assurance. Nevertheless the person he so much recommended had not the place in question. I obtained it for another for a thousand ducats, which I put in my strong box. I preferred this sum to all the thanks my clerk of the kitchen would have given me, and said with a mortified air, when we met again, Ah, my dear Navarro, you were too late in speaking to me. Calderona has prevented me, he has given the employment you mentioned to another. I am sorry that I have no better news for you.

My word was never in the least mistrusted, and we parted better friends than ever; but I fancy he soon dis-

covered the truth, for he never came to me again. I was glad of it; for, besides his services lying heavy upon me, I thought that in the station wherein I was at court, stewards were not proper company for me.

The Count de Lemos has been forgotten a good while; let us now return to him; I sometimes waited on him. I had carried him a thousand pistoles, as I formerly mentioned, and I carried him a thousand more by the Duke his uncle's order, out of money I had belonging to his Excellency. That day the Count de Lemos was pleased to have a long conversation with me, and told me that he had at last attained his desires, that he was the sole favourite and confident of the Prince of Spain. After this he intrusted me with a very honourable commission, for which he had before prepared me. Friend Santillane, said he, you must not now be idle. Use your utmost endeavours to find out some young beauty worthy to entertain a gallant Prince. You have wit enough, I shall say no more; run, fly, hunt, and when you have made a fortunate discovery, come and inform me of it. I promised the Count to be indefatigable in the discharge of this employment, which ought not to be very difficult, since it is undertaken by so many.

I was perfectly unaccustomed to this sort of office, but I did not doubt Scipio's being master of this also. Accordingly, when I came home, I called him apart, and said, My boy, I have a secret of importance to impart to you. Do you know, that, in the midst of Fortune's favours, I find something wanting? I have a pretty good guess what it is, said he, interrupting me, not allowing me to finish my discourse. You would have a smart wench to amuse and enliven you. I am very much surpris'd that you have not already had one in the prime of your years, when old grave fellows cannot be without one. I admire your penetration, re-

plied I, smiling. Yes, friend, it is a mistress I want, and you shall procure me one. But I must tell you, I am very nice in this point. I must have a handsome girl, who has no jilting tricks. Your request, replied Scipio, is something uncommon; nevertheless, thank Heaven, we are in a city, where there are some of all kinds, and I hope I shall soon find one to please you.

In short, three days afterwards he told me, I have discovered a treasure. There is a nymph, called Catalina, of a good family, and an enchanting beauty, who is governed by her aunt, in a little house where they live very reputably upon their substance, which is not considerable; I am acquainted with their Abigail, and she has just told me, that their door, though not open to any one, may however give admittance to a gallant who is rich and generous, provided, for fear of scandal, he will only come thither at night; and without making any noise. Upon this information I described you as a cavalier who deserves admision any where, and have begged Mrs. Chambermaid to propose you to the two ladies: she has promised me to do it, and bring me an answer to-morrow to a place appointed between both. That is very well, replied I; but I am afraid the wench has imposed upon you. No, no, replied he, I am not a man to be so easily duped; I have already enquired of the neighbours, and from their information, I conclude that Signiora Catalina is a Danae, with whom you may play the Jupiter, at the price of a golden shower.

How much soever I was prejudiced against this kind of good fortune, I caught at this; and as the maid came the next day to inform Scipio, that it should be my own fault if I was not introduced to the ladies that very night, I went thither between eleven and twelve. The wench received me without any light, and led me

by the hand into a genteel parlour, where I found the ladies elegantly dressed, and sitting upon satin cushions. No sooner did I enter than they rose, and saluted me with such a noble air, that I thought I was in the company of two persons of quality. Though the aunt, who was called Signiora Mencia, was still beautiful, she did not attract my eyes. It is true, her niece drew all one's attention, and yet, upon a strict examination, one might have said, that she was not a nonpareille; but she was possessed of so many charms, with such an inviting piquant air, that it was impossible for a man to observe her defects.

You may therefore believe that her sight dazzled my senses: I forgot that I was come thither to solicit for another, I spoke for myself, and entertained her with all the passion of a man deeply enamoured; and the little gypsey, whom I thought thrice as witty as she really was, (so agreeable she seemed in my eyes,) completed her conquest by her answers. I began to be no longer master of myself, when the aunt interrupted us, and thus said, to moderate my transports: Signior de Santillane, I am going to explain myself freely. I have admitted you into my house upon the good character I have had of you, without attempting to enhance the value of this favour by a vast number of ceremonies. But do not imagine you are ever the nearer for that; I have hitherto brought up my niece in retirement, and you are, (as one may say) the first cavalier who has seen her. If you think her worthy of being your spouse, I shall be very well pleased at her having that honour; consider if you like her at that price, you can have her at no other.

This speech of her's presently sent young Cupid packing, just as the urchin was going to let fly an arrow at me. To speak without metaphor, a marriage

proposed so bluntly awakened me. I immediately became a faithful agent to the Count de Lemos, and changing my tone, I thus answered Signiora Mencia. Madam, I like your freedom, and will imitate it. Whatever figure I make at court, I am not worthy of the incomparable Catalina; I have a more glorious offer in store for her, I design her for the Prince of Spain. It was enough to refuse my niece, replied the aunt coolly; that refusal, to my thinking, was sufficiently disobliging; you needed not to have added to it by your unseasonable raillery. I do not rally, Madam, cried I, I speak sincerely: I have orders to find a person worthy of receiving the Prince of Spain. I have met her in your house, and shall accordingly report her to him.

These words did not a little surprise Signiora Mencia: nevertheless, thinking she ought to appear upon the reserve, she answered me thus. Were I to believe you in earnest, I would have you know that I am not a woman to be proud of the infamous honour of seeing my niece mistress to a prince. My virtue is shocked at the thought.—You are a very pretty creature, said I, interrupting her, with your virtue! You talk like a foolish cit. What, do you banter, to look upon these things in a moral light? It is robbing them of all their beauty. One must view them with a favourable eye; imagine that you behold the heir to the crown at the feet of the fortunate Catalina; represent him to yourself adoring her, and loading her with presents; and imagine, that perhaps she may be the mother of a hero who may immortalize both his own name and her's.

Though the aunt would joyfully have accepted my proposal, she pretended not to know upon what to resolve; and Catalina, who would even then have been glad to have been sure of the Prince of Spain, affect-

ed to be very indifferent; which made me begin afresh to lay siege to the fort, till, at length, the aunt finding me discouraged, and ready to forsake the town, beat a parley, and we drew up a capitulation, containing the following articles:

First, That if the Prince of Spain should become very much inflamed upon the report that should be made him of Catalina, and should resolve to visit her by night, I should take care to acquaint the ladies with it, as also of the time appointed for that purpose.

Secondly, That the Prince should not be introduced thither but as an ordinary gallant, and attended by no other than me and his head minister of pleasure.

Having thus settled affairs, the aunt and niece were extremely kind to me, and even assumed a familiar air, by which being encouraged, I ventured to embrace them, which was not very ill received; and as we were parting, they did it of themselves with all the fondness imaginable. It is surprising to see how easily your procurers, and the nymphs who want them, become acquainted. One would have sworn, to see me retire in such favour, that I had been more happy than I really was.

When I told the Count de Lemos I had made such a discovery as would please him, he was very much delighted. I gave him such a character of Catalina, as made him very anxious to have an interview with her; upon which I carried him the next night, and he owned I had made an excellent choice. He told the ladies that he did not in the least doubt but the Prince of Spain would be very well pleased with the mistress I had pitched upon, and that, on the other hand, she would have reason to be content with her lover: that the young Prince was generous, and very good natured; in short, he assured them, that in a few days he would

bring him just as they desired, that is to say, without any noise or retinue. Hereupon the nobleman withdrew, and I went with him to his equipage, wherein we both came, and which waited for us at the end of the street. After this he set me down at my house, commanding me to inform his uncle the next morning of this beginning of our adventure, and to beg him, in his name, to send him a thousand pistoles to put the finishing stroke to it.

I went the next day to inform the Duke of Lerma of all that had passed. I concealed but one thing, I took not the least notice of Scipio; I pretended myself to be the discoverer of Catalina; for one assumes the honour of every thing to one's self amongst great men.

Having told the minister this, he paid me a great many compliments. Mr. Gil Blas, says he, with a rallying air, I am overjoyed, that with all your other talents, you have also that of hunting out beauties who are willing to oblige; when I want one, be pleased to allow me to beg your assistance. My Lord, answered I, in the same tone, I thank you for the preference; but suffer me to tell you, that I should make a scruple of procuring your Excellency these kinds of pleasures. Signior Don Rodrigo has so long had that employment, that it would be an injustice to supplant him. This answer made the Duke smile; then changing the discourse, he asked if his nephew did not want money for this expedition. Indeed he does, said I, he begs you to send him a thousand pistoles. Well then, replied the minister, you have nothing to do but to carry them; tell him not to spare them, but to humour the Prince in all the expences he pleases to desire.

C H A P. XI.

Catalina receives a secret Visit and several Presents from the Prince of Spain.

NOT long after I carried five hundred pistoles to the Count de Lemos, who said, you could not have come more a-propos. I have spoken to the Prince, he has bit at the hook, and is very impatient to see Catalina. He is resolved to steal out of his palace this very night to go thither. We have already taken our measures for that purpose. Acquaint the ladies with it, and carry them the money you have brought me; it is not amiss to shew them that they are to receive no ordinary lover; besides, a Prince's favours ought always to precede his gallantries. As you are to attend him with me, fail not to be to-night at his couchee; besides, I think it proper to use your coach, let it wait for us at midnight near the palace.

I immediately waited upon the ladies, but did not see Catalina, being told she was gone to lie down. I spoke only to Signiora Mencia. Madam, said I, I hope you will excuse my appearing at your house in the day, but I could not avoid it. I must inform you, that the Prince of Spain intends to wait upon you to-night; and here, continued I, putting into her hands a bag wherein was the money, here is an offering which he sends to the temple of Venus, to render the goddess propitious. You see I have not engaged you in an ill affair. I return you many thanks, replied she, but tell me, Signior de Santillane, is the Prince fond of music? O yes, rejoined I, to distraction; nothing charms him more

than a fine voice, accompanied with a lute finely touched. So much the better, cried she, very well pleased, you rejoice me in so saying, for my niece sings like a nightingale, and touches a lute to perfection. She even dances exquisitely. Heavens! cried I in my turn, these are a great many accomplishments, aunt! A woman need not have so many to make her fortune; one of these talents is sufficient for that.

Having thus prepared matters, I waited the hour of the Prince's couchee; which being come, I gave my coachman his instructions, and rejoined the Count de Lemos, who informed me that the Prince would feign a slight indisposition to get the sooner rid of all company, and that he would even go to bed, that they might really imagine he was unwell; but that he would rise again in an hour, and would come by a private door, down the back-stairs, that led into the court-yard.

Thus being made acquainted with every thing that had been concerted between them, he posted me in a place by which he assured me they must pass. I waited so long, that I began to imagine our gallant had taken another way, or had lost the desire of seeing Catalina; as if princes did not retain such fancies till they had satisfied them. In a word, I thought they had forgotten me, when I was accosted by two men, whom finding to be those I wanted, I conducted them to my coach, into which they both got. As for me, I sat by the coachman to serve him for a guide, and made him stop about fifty paces from the ladies. I gave my hand to the Prince and his companion, to help them down; after which we walked to the desired house, the door whereof opened at our approach, and was shut as soon as we got in.

We were at first in the same darkness as I was the first time; though to make some distinction, they had

fastened a small lamp to the wall, but it cast so dull a light, that we could only perceive it, without having any benefit from it. All this only served to render the adventure more agreeable to our hero, who was struck to the heart at the sight of the ladies, when they received him in a parlour illuminated with several tapers, which made amends for the darkness that reigned in the court yard. The aunt and the niece were in a gallant dishabille, wherein was such a mixture of coquetry, as made it not safe to see them. Our Prince would not have been dissatisfied with Signiora Mencia, if there had been no other; but the charms of the young Catalina carried the day, as they justly ought.

Well, my Prince, said the Count de Lemos, could we have procured you the pleasure of seeing two more beautiful persons? I am charmed with them, replied the Prince; and I should be very sure not to carry my heart back again, since it could not escape the aunt, if the niece could possibly fail of the conquest.

After a speech so gracious for the aunt, he paid a thousand tender compliments to Catalina, who made him very witty replies. As such honest fellows as act the part I did, are allowed to join in conversation with the lovers, provided it is to add fuel to the fire, I informed the gallant that his nymph sung and played on the lute to perfection. He was charmed at hearing she had these talents, and begged that she would give him a specimen. She yielded gracefully to his entreaties, and taking a lute ready tuned, played some tender airs, and sung after such a moving manner, that the Prince fell at her feet quite transported with love and pleasure. But let us draw the curtain over this picture. I shall only add, that the heir to the crown of Spain was plunged in such a soft bewitching ecstasy, that hours seemed as moments, and we were obli-

ged to force him from this dangerous house, as day-light began to appear. The gentlemen undertakers carried him quickly back to the palace, and left him in his apartment. They went afterwards to their own lodgings, not less pleased with having fitted him with a jilt, than if they had concluded his marriage with a princess.

As the Duke of Lerma desired me to inform him of every thing, I next morning told him this adventure; and as I was finishing the recital, the Count de Lemos came in, and said to us: The Prince of Spain is so much charmed with Catalina, and is so prepossessed in her favour, that he proposes to visit her often, and keep to her. He would have sent her two thousand pistoles worth of jewels, but he has not the money. He lately thus spoke to me: Dear Lemos, said he, you must procure me that sum immediately. I am very sensible that I put you to an inconvenience, and drain you: accordingly I esteem myself not a little obliged to you, and if ever I am in a capacity to acknowledge, any other way than by my affection, all that you have done for me, you shall have no cause to repent your having obliged me. My Prince, said I, I have friends and credit, I will bring you what you want.

He can easily be satisfied, said the Duke to his nephew, Santillane shall bring you the money; or, if you think proper, he shall himself buy the jewels, for he is a connoisseur in those affairs, especially rubies. Is not this true, Gil Blas? added he, looking at me with a malicious smile. How cruel you are, my Lord! replied I. I see you want to make the Count merry at my expense. That was really the case. The nephew asked what mystery was therein. Nothing, replied the minister laughing; only Santillane thought fit one day to change a diamond for a ruby, and this exchange proved neither advantageous nor honourable to him.

If the minister had stopped here, I should have been very happy, but he took the pains to relate the trick which Camilla and Don Raphael had played me in a ready-furnished lodging, and to enlarge particularly upon the most disagreeable circumstances. His Excellency having diverted himself sufficiently, ordered me to attend the Count de Lemos, with whom I went to a jeweller's, where we chose the precious stones, which we went to shew the Prince; after which they were intrusted with me to present them to Catalina. This done, I went to my lodging to bring two thousand pistoles of the Duke's money to pay for the jewels.

It cannot in the least be doubted whether or no I was received graciously the next night, when I produced the presents of my embassy, consisting of a fine ring for the aunt, and a pair of pendants for the niece. These marks of the Prince's love and generosity greatly pleasing them, they began to talk like a couple of parrots, and to thank me for having procured them so good an acquaintance. They forgot themselves in the excess of their joy, and dropped some words which made me suspect that I had helped the heir of the crown to a cheat. Having left them, I went home to Scipio, designing to come to an eclaireissement, that I might be assured whether I had performed this noble masterpiece.



C H A P. XII.

Gil Blas is greatly perplexed when he discovers who Catalina is; the Precaution he was obliged to take.

UPON my arrival at home, my ears were saluted with a prodigious noise, and when I asked the reason of it, was told, that it was Scipio, who was entertaining half a dozen friends at supper. They sung as if they would rend their throats, and burst into such loud fits of laughter, that I am well assured this was none of the banquets of the seven wise men.

As soon as the master of the feast knew of my arrival, he said to his company: Gentlemen, it is nothing, only my patron is come home. Let not that disturb you. Be merry still; I will but speak two words to him, and return to you immediately. Thus saying, he came to me. What a noise is there? said I. What sort of people are you treating below? Are they poets? No indeed, replied he, I should be very sorry to waste your wine upon such fellows. I make a better use of it. I have among my guests a wealthy young man, who desires your interest to get him an employment, for which he will pay you. The entertainment is upon his account; every glass he drinks I encrease the present he is to make you ten pistoles, and I will keep him to it till day. If that is the case, says I, return again to your company, and do not spare my wine.

Thinking it improper to mention any thing to him then of Catalina, I waited till next morning, and when I arose, I thus addressed him: Friend Scipio, you know after what manner we live together; I rather use you

like a companion than a servant; for which reason you would be to blame if you cheated me as a master: therefore let us have no secrets between us: what I am going to tell you will surprize you, and you on the other hand must give me your opinion of the two women with whom you have brought me acquainted. I have a great notion that they are two sharpers, and their affecting so much simplicity, strengthens my suspicion. If I do them justice, the Prince of Spain has no great reason to commend me, for I own it was for him I asked you for a mistress. I have carried him to Catalina, and he is very much taken with her. Sir, answered Scipio, you behave too well to me for me not to be sincere with you. I had yesterday a private conversation with the waiting-women of our two ladies, who related to me their history, which seemed to me diverting. I will give you a faithful recital of it.

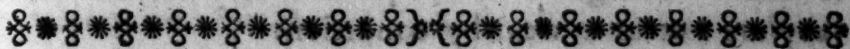
Catalina, added he, is daughter to a little Arragonian gentleman; being left at fifteen an orphan as poor as she is handsome, she gave ear to an old commander, who took her to Toledo, where he died in six months, after having rather lived with her like a father than a husband. She gathered together her inheritance, which consisted of some cloaths, and three hundred pistoles in ready money; after which she entered into a league with Signiora Mencia, who was still passable, though upon the decline. These two sincere friends lived together, and began to keep such a house that the officers of justice would have taken cognisance of it. Our two adventurers were not well pleased at this, therefore out of spite they quitted Toledo very abruptly, and came to settle at Madrid, where they have lived near two years without visiting any lady in the neighbourhood. But the best of it is, they have hired two little houses, divided only by a wall; one may go from one to the

other by a stair-case that has a communication with both in the cellars. Signiora Mencia lives in the one with a young chambermaid, and the commander's princess has the other with an old duenna whom she calls her grandmother. So that our Arragonian is sometimes a niece educated by her aunt, and sometimes an orphan brought up under the wing of her grandmother. She assumes the name of Catalina, when she acts the part of the niece; and when she passes for the grandchild, she is called Sirena.

Hearing the name of Sirena, I interrupted Scipio, and turned pale. What do I hear? said I. Alas! I am afraid this cursed Arragonian is Calderona's mistress. Indeed she is, replied he, I thought you would be glad at hearing this news. You do not think what you say, answered I, it is more likely to cause me trouble than joy: do not you see the consequence? I do not, rejoined Scipio. What misfortune can happen? Don Rodrigo may probably never discover what passes; and if you are afraid he should, you have nothing to do but to prepossess the minister against him. Acquaint him with the whole affair sincerely; he will see your honesty; and if Calderona should endeavour after that to do you ill offices with his Excellency, he will find that he only endeavours to ruin you out of a spirit of revenge.

This speech of Scipio banished all my fear. I followed his counsel, and informed the Duke of Lerma of this fatal discovery. I even affected to put on a melancholy air in giving him this account, to persuade him that I was very much mortified at having innocently procured the mistress of Don Rodrigo for the Prince; but the minister, far from pitying his favourite, only made a jest of it. After this, he bid me go on my way, and said, that, after all, it was a glory for Calderona to

Thinking by this management that I had delivered my bark from shipwreck, I no longer dreaded any thing; I again attended the Prince to Catalina, alias the beautiful Sirena's, who was artful enough in finding excuses to keep Don Rodrigo at a distance, and rob him of those nights she thought proper to spend in the Prince's company.



CHAP. XIII.

Gil Blas still acts up to his former Character. What Impression the News he hears of his Family makes upon him. Fabricio and he quarrel.

MY anti-chamber, as I before observed, was crowded with persons who came to make me proposals. But I would not receive them by word of mouth; but following the custom of the court, or rather to make myself appear a man of consequence, I said to each petitioner, Give me a written memorial. I was so used to this, that I said the same to my landlord, who came one day to tell me that I owed him a year's rent. As for my butcher and my baker, they spared me the pains, they were so exact in bringing in their bills monthly. Scipio (who mimicked me so well, that one might have said that the copy was not inferior to the original) used persons in the same manner who addressed themselves to him, to desire them to speak in their behalf.

I was also guilty of another piece of pride, for which I do not pretend to excuse myself: I was fool enough to speak of the greatest noblemen, as if I had been their equals. For instance, if I had occasion to mention the Duke d'Offuna, the Duke d'Alba, or the Duke de Medina Sidonia, I said without ceremony d'Alba, d'Offuna, and Medina Sidonia. In a word, I was become so haughty and so vain, that I had forgot my father and mother. Alas! poor duenna, and poor gentleman of the horse, I never made the least enquiry in what manner you lived in Asturia! I never had the least thought of you. The court has the virtue of the river Lethe, it makes us forget both our parents and friends when they are not in a weakly condition.

They were thus quite out of my mind, when a young fellow came to me one morning, who said that he wanted to speak to me one word in private. I took him into my closet, and without offering him a chair, because he seemed of common rank, I enquired what he wanted with me. Signior Gil Blas, said he, what, do you not remember my features? It was in vain for me to observe him attentively; I was obliged to tell him that he was quite unknown to me. Know then, continued he, that I am one of your countrymen, born even at Oviedo, and son to Bertrand Muscada the grocer, who lives at no great distance from your uncle the canon. I remember you very well, we have frequently played at Gallina Ciega * together.

I have but a confused idea, replied I, of my infant diversions; the cares that have since taken up my time have banished them my memory. I am come to this city, said he, to settle accompts with my father's correspondent; I heard you mentioned; and was informed

* Blind-man's buff.

that you was well settled at court, and already as rich as a Jew. I congratulate you thereupon, and shall greatly rejoice your family, at my return, by telling them such agreeable news.

I could not avoid asking in what condition he had left my parents and uncle; but I acquitted myself so coolly, that I gave the grocer no reason to admire the force of nature. He seemed shocked at the indifference which I shewed for persons who ought to have been so dear to me; and as he was a mere rustic, I thought, said he bluntly, you had more tenderness and affection for our relations. With what a cool air do you enquire after them? I must tell you, that your father and mother are still in service, and that the good canon Gil Perez is almost dead, being loaden with years and infirmities. One must have natural affection; and since you are in a condition to do service to your father and mother, I advise you as a friend to send them every year two hundred pistoles. This supply, which will be but trifling to you, will make their lives easy and happy.

Instead of being moved at the description he gave of my family, I was only offended with the liberty he took to advise me without my desiring it. Perhaps he might have persuaded me with more address; but he only incensed me by his freedom. He saw it by my sullen silence, and continuing his exhortations more out of malice than charity, I became impatient. O! it is too much, replied I in a passion. Go, Mr. Muscada, meddle only with your own affairs. It is very fit for you to instruct me in my duty. I know better than you what ought to be done on this occasion. Thus saying, I thrust the grocer out of my closet, and sent him back to Oviedo to sell almonds and raisins.

Nevertheless, what he had said to me made an im-

pression upon my mind; and reproaching myself for being an unnatural son, I began to relent. I recollected how careful they had been of me and of my education in my infancy. I represented to myself how much I was indebted to my parents; and my reflections were attended with some grateful transports, which however ended in nothing. My ingratitude quickly stifled them, and they were succeeded by a profound oblivion. There are not a few fathers who have children that behave in the same manner.

My temper was entirely changed by the avarice and ambition which possessed me. I lost all my chearfulness. I became pensive and melancholy; in a word, an ass. Fabricio seeing me entirely taken up with the care of sacrificing all to fortune, and very much disengaged from the friendship I had for him, very seldom came near me. He could not forbear telling me so one day: In truth, Gil Blas, you are quite altered from what you was formerly. Your mind was always easy before you came to court: now you are in a perpetual hurry. You form one project after another to enrich yourself, and the more money you get, the more you covet. Besides this, shall I tell it to you? you have no longer that open heart, that free behaviour wherein the charms of friendship consist, but are reserved, and hide from me the inward recesses of your soul. I even observe that your civilities are constrained. In short, this Gil Blas is quite a different person from the Gil Blas who was my acquaintance.

You jest sure, replied I, with a cool air: I do not perceive any alteration in myself. It is not by your own eyes, said he, that you must be judged; they have a mist before them. Believe me, there is but too real a change. Speak to me sincerely, friend, do we converse together as formerly? When I used to knock at

your door in a morning, you would come and open it yourself, frequently half asleep, and I entered without ceremony. But what a difference to-day! you have footmen; and I must wait in the anti-chamber till my name is carried in. Besides, in what manner do you receive me? With a frozen complaisance, as if you was my lord. One would imagine that my visits began to grow troublesome; and do you think that such a reception can be agreeable to a man with whom you used formerly to be so familiar? No, Santillane, no. It is by no means suitable to my humour; farewell, let us part friends: let us rid ourselves, the one of a censor of his actions, and the other of an upstart who forgets himself.

These reproaches rather incensed than moved me; and I suffered him to go without the least attempt to detain him. In the condition I was then in, the friendship of a poet did not seem to me so valuable, as that I should be sorry for the loss of it. I found the means to comfort myself in the conversation of some of his Majesty's under-officers, with whom a conformity of temper had within a little while united me strictly. These new acquaintance were men who had sprung from nothing, and whose lucky stars had advanced them to their posts. They all lived already at their ease, and these wretches ascribing the favours which the King heaped on them only to their own merit, had forgot themselves as much as I. We thought ourselves persons of great consequence. Thus, O Fortune! are thy favours for the most part dispensed. The saying of Epictetus, the Stoic, that you resemble a young lady of quality who prostitutes herself to her valets, is very just.



THE
ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS
DE SANTILLANE.

BOOK IX.

CHAP. I.

Scipio is desirous of having Gil Blas enter into the Marriage State, for which Purpose he proposes to him a celebrated wealthy Goldsmith's Daughter. What Steps they take in that Affair.

A GREAT deal of company having supped with me one night, as usual, which being withdrawn, I asked my man what he had been busy about all that day. A master-piece, cried he, I am going to marry you. I am procuring you the only daughter of a goldsmith with whom I am acquainted.

Have you lost your senses? exclaimed I; can you propose a goldsmith's, or any citizen's daughter to me?

Methinks, when one has some merit, and is upon a certain footing at court, one ought not to look so low. Ah! Sir, answered Scipio, you view it in a wrong light. Remember that it is the man who ennobles a family, and be not more nice than a thousand lords whom I know. Let me tell you, that the heiress in question is worth a hundred thousand ducats; which is no bad piece of goldsmith's ware? Hearing him mention such a vast sum, I became more tractable. I submit, said I to my secretary, the portion determines me. How long will it be before I shall receive it? Softly, Sir, replied he, a little patience. The affair must first be broken to the father, whom I shall take care to dispose to approve of it. Very fine, cries I, bursting out a laughing, is that to be done yet? Here is a marriage finely advanced. More than you think, rejoined he. I desire no more than one hour's conversation with the goldsmith, to gain his consent. But before we proceed any further, pray let us come to a composition. Suppose I procure you a hundred thousand ducats, what will you give me? Twenty thousand, replied I. Heaven be praised, said he, I reckoned upon no more than ten thousand. You are more generous by half than me. Come on, I will enter upon this negotiation to-morrow, and you may assure yourself of success, or say I am a blockhead.

Two days after, Scipio thus said to me: I have spoken to Signior Gabriel Salero, for that was the name of my goldsmith. I have extolled your merit and interest so much, that he gave ear to the proposal I made of accepting you for his son-in-law. He will give you his daughter with a hundred thousand ducats, provided you make it plainly appear that you are in the minister's favour. If it be so, said I then to Scipio, it will not be long before I be married. But to the matter

in hand, have you seen the daughter? is she handsome? Not so agreeable as her portion, answered he. Take my word for it, this rich heiress is no very charming creature. By good fortune you do not value that. Indeed I do not, my lad, replied I. We courtiers marry only for the sake of marrying. As for beauty, we look for that in our neighbours' wives; and if by chance our own should happen to be handsome, we pay so little regard to them, that they do us but justice, if they punish us for it.

I must also inform you, added Scipio, Signior Gabriel invites you to supper to-night, but it is agreed beforehand, that marriage is never to be mentioned. There are also to be several merchants his friends, where you will be only as a simple guest, and to-morrow he will come and sup with you after the same manner. By this you may perceive, that he is a man who will study your temper before he proceeds any further. You must be a little upon your guard when in his presence. It does not signify, interrupted I with an air of confidence, let him examine me as much as he thinks proper, I can lose nothing by this scrutiny.

All these particulars were punctually executed. I was conducted to the goldsmith's, who received me as familiarly as if we had been old acquaintance. He was a good citizen, who was, as we say, polite even to be fatiguing. He presented me to Signiora Eugenia his wife, and young Gabriela his daughter. I made them several compliments, without breaking the treaty. I said a vast number of fine nothings, the usual phrases of a courtier.

Gabriela, no dispraise to my secretary, did not seem disagreeable to me; whether it was because she was extraordinarily dressed, or because my eyes were dazzled with her fortune. My intended father-in-law had

a pretty sort of house; I believe it contains more silver than the mines of Peru. Wherever one turned one's eyes, this metal struck one's sight under different forms. All the rooms, and particularly that in which we were, was a treasure. What a glorious sight was that for a son-in-law! Signior Gabriel, that he might do more honour to his entertainment, had provided five or six merchants, all tedious formal persons. Their whole discourse was of trade; and one might have said, that their conversation was rather a conference of merchants, than the conversation of friends invited to supper.

I entertained the goldsmith in my turn the following night. Not being able to dazzle him with my plate, I had recourse to another illusion. I invited such of my friends to supper, as made the best figure at court, and whom I knew to be so ambitious, as to be unbounded in their desires. These gentlemen talked of nothing but their future grandeur, and of the great and splendid posts to which they aspired. This produced the desired effect; the goldsmith, dazzled with their grand ideas, thought himself, notwithstanding all his riches, but a petty mortal in comparison of these gentry. As for my part, pretending to be moderate, I said that I should content myself with a middling fortune, as twenty thousand ducats a-year. Whereupon these wretches, who were never to be satisfied with honour or riches, cried out, that I was to blame, and that being, as I was, the favourite of the prime minister, I ought not to confine myself to so little. My intended father-in-law lost not one tittle of these words, and I imagined that I observed, as he was going away, that he was very much pleased.

Scipio did not fail going in the morning to ask how he liked me, to which he replied, I am delighted with

him; the young fellow has won my heart. But, continued he, Mr. Scipio, I conjure you by our old acquaintance, tell me sincerely; we have all our failings as you are sensible, let me know that of the Signior de Santillane. Is he a gamester? Does he wench? What is his predominant vice? I beg you would inform me of it. Signior Gabriel, replied the go-between, you affront me by asking me this question: I am more your friend than my master's; if he had any ill habit that might render your daughter's life miserable, think you I should have proposed him for your son-in-law? No, faith! I have too great a regard for you. But, between us two, I find no other fault in him but that of having none. He is too provident for a young man. So much the better, cried the goldsmith, that pleases me. Go, friend; you may let him know that he should have my daughter if he were not a favourite of the prime minister's.

Being informed of all this discourse by Scipio, I immediately ran to Salero's to thank him for his favourable opinion of me. He had declared already his will to his wife and daughter, who, by their reception gave me to understand, that they were obedient to his will. Upon this, I carried the Signior to the Duke de Lerma's, whom I had prepared the evening before; and I presented him to his Excellency, who gave him a gracious welcome, and expressed a great deal of joy that he had chosen for his son-in-law a man whom he greatly esteemed, and whom he designed to advance. He afterwards enlarged upon my good qualities, and, in short, spoke so favourably of me, that honest Gabriel thought he had met in me the best match in Spain for his daughter. It gave him so much joy, that he could hardly refrain from weeping. He tenderly embraced me at our parting, and said to me, Son, I am so im-

patient to see you the spouse of my Gabriela, that the nuptials shall be consummated in a few days.



CHAP. II.

How Gil Blas remembered Don Alphonso de Leyva, and what Service he did him merely out of Vanity.

THE order of my history and adventures obliging me to leave the marriage for a little, I must relate the service I did my former master Don Alphonso. I had entirely forgot that cavalier, and I recollected him upon the following occasion.

Hearing that the government of the city of Valencia was vacant, I thought of Don Alphonso de Leyva. I considered that this employment would suit him to a tittle, and resolved to ask it for him, more out of ostentation than friendship. I thought, that it would do me an infinite honour if I obtained it. Accordingly I addressed myself to the Duke de Lerma, and told him, that having been steward to Don Cæsar de Leyva and his son, and having all the reason in the world to speak in their favour, I made free to beg him to grant the government of Valencia either to the one or the other. The Duke answered me, With all my heart, Gil Blas, I am pleased to see you grateful and generous; besides, you intercede in behalf of a family for whom I have a great regard. The Leyva's are the King's good subjects; they deserve the place very well; you may dispose of it as you think proper; I give it you for a marriage present.

This success giving me great pleasure, I went immediately to Calderona, to draw up the patent for Don Alphonso: there I saw several persons waiting, till Don

Rodrigo should please to give them audience; I passed through the croud to the closet-door, which was opened on my appearing. There I found a vast number of knights, commanders, and other persons of condition, to whom Calderona gave audience by turns. It was droll enough to behold the different manner he received them. To one he would only give a little nod with his head; to another he would make a bow, and conduct him to the closet door. He put (as one may say) shades of respect in the compliments he paid to every one. On the other hand, I perceived some cavaliers, who (being ill pleased with the little regard he shewed them) cursed in their hearts the necessity that obliged them to cringe to such an upstart. On the contrary, I saw others who laughed within themselves at his foolish insolence. I made these observations in vain; I was not capable of drawing any advantage thence to myself; I did the same at my house, and cared not whether they approved or blamed my haughty behaviour, provided it made me be respected.

Don Rodrigo having accidentally beheld me, left a gentleman who was talking to him very abruptly, and came to embrace me with such demonstrations of friendship as astonished me. Ah, my dear brother, cried he, to what am I indebted for the pleasure of seeing you here? I told him my errand; whereupon he assured me in the most obliging terms, that he would dispatch i by the next day at the same hour. He carried his civility still further; he conducted me to the door of his anti-chamber, a compliment he only paid to great noblemen, and there he again embraced me.

Wherefore does he use me so respectfully? said I to myself as I was going; what can it mean? is Calderona meditating my ruin? or has he a mind to court my friendship? or does he keep fair with me, with a view

of getting me to be his intercessor with our patron, as foreseeing that his favour is upon the decline? I did not know which of these conjectures to fix upon. When I called upon him the following day, he treated me after the same manner, fatiguing me with his civilities and caresses. It is true, he fell short of it in his reception of others who addressed themselves to him. He spoke short to one, was very cool to others, and sent away almost every one dissatisfied. But they were all sufficiently revenged by an adventure that happened, which I must relate to you. It will be a caution to all clerks and secretaries that read it.

A plain dressed man, who did not appear of the rank he was, came to Calderona, and spoke to him of a certain memorial, which he said he had presented to the Duke de Lerma. Don Rodrigo did not so much as look upon the gentleman, but bluntly enquired of him, What is your name, friend? In my infancy, replied the cavalier very coolly, I was called Francillo; I was since stiled Don Francisco de Zuniga, and my title now is the Count de Pedrosa. These words confounded Calderona, who finding that he had to do with a man of the first quality, wanted to excuse himself: My Lord, said he to the Count, I beg pardon, if out of ignorance of your quality——I want none of thy excuses, cried Francillo, haughtily interrupting him, I despise them as much as thy ill manners. Know that a secretary to a prime minister should receive every body civilly. Be, if thou wilt, proud enough to look upon thyself as thy master's substitute, but also remember that thou art but his valet.

This accident greatly mortified the haughty Don Rodrigo; nevertheless he became not a bit more humble. For my part, I took notice of that rebuke, and resolved to be careful who I spake to when I gave audience, as

also, not to be insolent but with mutes. Don Alphonso's patent being drawn up, I took it with me, and sent it by a courier to that young nobleman, with a letter from the Duke de Lerma, wherein his Excellency informed him, that the King had just appointed him governor of Valencia. I made not the least mention of what share I had in obtaining it; I did not so much as write to him, reserving to myself the pleasure of telling it in person when he should come to court, to take the oaths for his post.



C H A P. III.

Great Preparations are made for Gil Blas's Marriage, which are rendered abortive by an unforeseen Adventure.

WE must now return to the goldsmith's fair daughter, to whom I was to be married in eight days; and preparations were made on both sides for the wedding. Salero had rich cloaths made for the bride, and I hired a waiting-woman, a footman, and an old gentleman-usher. Scipio made choice of all these, who was more impatient than I, for the day for paying down the fortune.

The night preceding this so-much wished for day, I supped at my intended father-in-law's, with uncles, aunts, cousins, and a prodigious croud of relations. In short, I acted the part of an hypocritical son-in-law to the life. I was very complaisant to the goldsmith and his wife. I counterfeited the passionate lover to Gabriela, and courted the whole family; listening, without impatience, to their dull discourse, and city-conversation. Accordingly, I was so fortunate as to please

all the relations, as a reward for my patience; so that every one of them seemed to be well pleased with my alliance.

After supper, the company were introduced into a large hall, where they were entertained with a vocal and instrumental concert, which was tolerably performed, though they had not chosen the best masters in Madrid. Our ears being agreeably ravished with several sprightly airs, it so enlivened us that we began to dance. It may easily be imagined after what manner we acquitted ourselves, since I was taken for one of Terpsichore's scholars, I who had never made any greater proficiency in this art, that what I had learned in two or three lessons which I had been taught at the Marchioness de Chaves's, by a petty dancing-master who came to the pages. Having diverted ourselves very well, it grew late, and we began to think of going home. I was profuse of my bows and embraces. Dear son-in-law, says Salero, taking me in his arms, I will bring you the portion to-morrow morning in good specie. I shall be very glad to see you, replied I, dear father-in-law. Then taking leave of the family, I went to my coach, which waited at the door, and directed my course homewards.

I had not got two hundred paces from Signior Gabriel's, when my coach was furrounded and stopt by fifteen or twenty men, some on horseback, some on foot, who cried, Stand in the King's name. Thus saying, they made me alight roughly, and get into a calash, where one of them accompanied me, and ordered the coachman to drive towards Segovia. This made me conjecture that it was an honest alguazil who sat by me, and would have asked the cause of my imprisonment. But he answered me after the manner of those gentlemen, that is to say, like a brute, that he had no

business to tell me. I said that probably he might be mistaken. No, Signior de Santillane, you are the person I am ordered to carry where we are going. Having nothing to say to these words, I was silent the rest of the night, whilst we travelled along the Manca-narez. At Colmenar we got fresh horses, and we reached Segovia about the evening, where the tower received a new guest within its walls.



CHAP. IV.

In what Manner Gil Blas was treated in the Tower of Segovia, and how he came to know for what Reason he had been carried thither.

I WAS immediately put into a dungeon, with nothing but straw to lie upon, like one of the vilest malefactors. I spent that night, not in giving myself up to despair, for I was not yet wholly sensible of my misfortune, but in examining within myself, what could have caused my disgrace. I verily believed that it was Calderona's handy-work; however, it was in vain to suspect him of having discovered all; I could not imagine how he could induce the Duke of Lerma to be so severe with me. Sometimes I thought my seizure was unknown to his Excellency; at other times I fancied, that the Duke himself had done it for some reason of state, as ministers frequently have served their favourites.

I was sensibly tortured with my different conjectures, when day, breaking through a little grated window, shewed me all the horror of the place where I was immured. I then became very much afflicted, and my eyes were two fountains of tears, which were

rendered inexhaustible by the remembrance of my former happiness. Whilst I was thus giving way to my grief, the goaler came into my dungeon with a loaf and a pitcher of water for my day's subsistence. He looked upon me, and perceiving that my face was bathed in tears, as much a goaler as he was, he was affected. Prisoner, said he, do not despair; you must not let the misfortunes of life cast you down, you are yet young; you will see happier days; in the mean time eat the King's allowance with a good courage.

Having made this speech, my comforter left me; I answered only with sighs and complaints: and I spent the whole day in bewailing my unhappy fate, without thinking of doing any credit to my provision, which, in the condition I was, seemed rather an effect of the King's wrath than of his goodness, since it served to prolong the misery of the wretched.

Night now approaching, I heard a great noise of keys. The door of my dungeon opened, and immediately a man entered with a wax candle. Coming towards me, he said: Signior Gil Blas, in me you behold one of your old friends; I am that Don Andrea de Tordefillas, who lived with you at Grenada, and was gentleman to the archbishop, when you was favourite to that prelate. You begged him, if you remember, to use his interest for me, and he procured me the grant of an employment at Mexico; but instead of embarking for the Indies, I remained in the city of Alicant, where I married the keeper of the castle's daughter, and by a series of adventures which I will relate to you presently, I am now become governour of the tower of Segovia. I have express orders not to let you speak to any one, to allow you only bread and water for sustenance, and to make you lie upon straw. But besides my having humanity enough to be moved at your misfortunes,

you have been serviceable to me, and my gratitude prevails over my orders. Instead of being an instrument of the cruel usage you suffer, I shall endeavour to mitigate the hardship of your confinement: come along with me.

Although the keeper very well deserved my thanks, my spirits were so confounded, that I could not make the least reply. However, I went with him cross a court-yard, and up a very narrow stair-case, into a little room at the very top of the tower. I was greatly amazed, at my entrance into this chamber, to behold two candles burning upon a table in brass candlesticks, and a cloth laid, with two very genteel plates, knives, forks, &c. Supper will be here immediately, says Tordeillas; we will both eat a mouthful: I design this corner for your lodging: you will be better here than in your dungeon. From your window you will have a prospect of the flowry banks of the Erema, and the delicious valley which extends itself from the feet of the two mountains that divide the two Castiles, as far as Coca. I know very well that you will at first take no notice of such a fine landscape; but when the liveliness of your grief has given way to a pleasing melancholy, you will take a pleasure in entertaining your eyes with such agreeable objects. Besides this, depend upon it, you shall neither want for linen, nor any thing necessary for a man who loves neatness; as also you shall have a good bed, eat well, and I will furnish you with as many books as you have a mind for. In short, you shall have all the delights that a prison can afford.

These obliging offers comforted me, and I resumed courage enough to return my goaler a thousand thanks. I told him that his generous procedure restored me to life, and that I wished I might ever again be in a condition to express my acknowledgments. And why

should you not? replied he. Do you imagine that you will always be a prisoner? You are in the wrong; and I dare assure you, that you will come off for some months confinement. What say you, Signior Don Andrea? cried I; I fancy you are acquainted with the cause of my misfortune. I own it, replied he, I am not ignorant thereof; the alguazil who brought you hither, intrusted me with secrets which I dare reveal to you. He told me, that his Majesty being acquainted that the Count de Lemos and yourself had one night carried the Prince of Spain to a suspicious house, had for your punishment banished the Count, and sent you to the tower of Segovia, there to be treated with all the severity which you have undergone since your coming hither. And how, said I, could the King hear of this? That is the very circumstance that I want to know. And that, replied he, is what the alguazil did not tell me, undoubtedly not knowing it himself.

While we were thus discoursing, we were interrupted by several servants, who brought in the supper. They set upon the table a loaf, two glasses, as many bottles, and three large dishes, in one of which was a ragout of a hare's entrails, with plenty of onion, oil, and saffron; in another an * olla podrida; and in the third a Turkey powt upon some marmelade † of berengena. When Tordefillas saw that they had brought all that we wanted, he sent away his domestics, not being willing they should hear our discourse. He shut the door, and we both sat down opposite to each other. Let us begin, said he, by what is most urgent. You must needs have a good stomach, not having made a meal of any consequence these two days. Having thus

* Olla podrida, a hodge-podge.

† Berengena, a little pompion, called the Apple of Loe.

spoken, he helped me plentifully. He thought he was serving a wretch that was famished, and indeed he had some reason to believe that I was going to cram myself with his ragouts. However, he was deceived in his expectation; as hungry as I was, I could not get a bit down, my heart was so full of my present condition. My goaler in vain incited me to drink, and praised the goodness of his wine, in order to drive out of my mind the melancholy ideas that always afflicted me; had he given me nectar, the drinking of it would not have pleased me in the least. He perceived it, and taking another method, he began to relate the history of his marriage in a jocular stile. He succeeded yet worse this way than the other. I listened to his account with so much distraction, that when he had done, I knew as little of it as I did before he began. He judged very rightly, that he undertook in vain to divert my chagrin that night. Hereupon he rose from table when supper was ended, and said: Signior de Santillane, I am going to leave you to your repose, or rather to brood on your misfortunes. But I again tell you, it will not be of long continuance. The King is not naturally severe. When his passion is over, and he represents to himself the miserable condition you now are in, he will think you have been punished enough. At these words, the keeper went down, and sent up his servants to uncover the table. They left nothing, not even the candles, and I had no other light to go to bed with, than that of a lamp that hung against the wall.

 CHAP. V.

What Reflections he made that Night before he slept; and of the Noise that waked him.

IT was near two hours after my comforter left me before I could compose myself to sleep, reflecting upon what he had told me. I am now in this condition, said I, for having been accessory to the pleasures of the heir of the crown. But how imprudent was it to do such a service to so young a Prince! For it is his being so very young that was all my crime; if he was more advanced in years, the King perhaps would only have laughed at what has now so greatly vexed him. But who could inform the King of it, without apprehending the resentment of the Prince, or Duke of Lerma? That minister will undoubtedly revenge his nephew's disgrace. How has the King discovered it? That is what I cannot comprehend.

This thought always recurred to me. However, the idea that afflicted me most, that rendered me quite desperate, and which I could never banish out of my mind, was the plunder to which I rightly judged that all my effects were given up. O my strong box, cried I, my dear money, what is become of you? into what hands are you fallen? Alas! I have lost you in less time than I got you! I painted in my imagination a lively picture of the disorder that reigned in my house, and I made thereupon several reflections, one more melancholy than another. The confusion of so many different thoughts threw me into a heaviness that proved favourable to me; sleep, which had fled my eyes the night before, came and locked up my senses; to which the goodness

of the bed, the fatigues I had suffered, and the fumes of the meat and wine, all contributed. I slept soundly, and according to all appearance should have continued in that state till day, if I had not been awakened by a noise not often heard in a prison. It was the sound of a guitar accompanied with a man's voice. I was all ears, but could hear no more, so that I thought it was a dream. But not long afterwards, I heard the sound of the same instrument and voice, which sung these four verses.

* *Ay de mi! un ano felice
Parece un soplo ligero;
Pero sin dicha un instante
Es un siglo de tormento.*

So a-propos was this couplet to my present case, that it seemed to have been made on purpose to renew my troubles. I am but too sensible, said I, of the truth of these words. Methinks the time of my prosperity is vanished very quickly, but I have already been an age in confinement. I plunged myself anew in a dismal reverie, and began again to give myself up to despair, as if I had taken pleasure therein. Nevertheless my complaints ended with the night; and the first ray of light with which the sun enlightened my chamber, mitigated a little my uneasiness. I got up to open my window, and air my room. I took a view of the country, which I remembered that the keeper had elegantly described to me; but I could not find any thing to justify his account of it. The Erema, which I thought at least rivalled the Tagus, seemed to be but a brook. Its flowry borders were set off with nothing but nettles

* Alas! a year of pleasure passes like the fleeting wind; but a moment when one is miserable seems an age of torments.

and thistles, and the pretended delicious vale only saluted my eyes with a view of fields, the greatest part whereof were uncultivated. Undoubtedly I had not yet attained to the pleasing melancholy, which was to make me see things with other eyes than I did at that time.

I began to put on my cloaths, and was already half dressed, when Tordeillas entered my room, attended by an old servant maid, who brought me shirts and towels. Signior Gil Blas, said he, here is linen, which I beg you would not spare; I will take care you shall never want. Well, added he, how have you passed the night? Did sleep suspend your troubles for some minutes? I should perhaps still have been sleeping, answered I, if I had not been awakened by a voice in concert with a guitar. The cavalier who disturbed your repose, replied he, is a state prisoner, whose chamber is next to yours. He is a knight of the military order of Calatrava, and is made to charm one: he is called Don Gaston de Cogollos. You may both visit each other, and sup together: you will find a mutual comfort in your conversation, and will very much please each other.

I told Don Andrea, that I should never forget the favour he did me, in suffering me to unite my afflictions with the cavalier's; and as I seemed impatient to know this companion in misfortunes, our obliging keeper procured me that pleasure that very day. I dined with Don Gaston, whose beauty and mien astonished me. Judge what he must be, to make so strong an impression upon the eyes of one who was accustomed to see the handsomest young gentlemen about court. Form to yourself an idea of a man made for conquests; one of those heroes in romances, whose appearance alone gave pain to princes, and broke their rest. Be-

fides, nature, who generally mingles her gifts, had endued Cogollos with a great deal of wit and courage; in a word, he was a perfect cavalier.

If I was delighted with this gentleman, I had on the other hand the good fortune not to prove disagreeable to him. He would not sing any more in the night for fear of disturbing me, notwithstanding all I could say to beg him not to constrain himself for me. A friendship is soon contracted between two persons equally in distress. Our first acquaintance was soon followed by a tender value for each other, which was daily heightened. The liberty that was given us to talk together when we thought proper, was of no small service to us, since by our conversation we reciprocally comforted each other, and resolved to be resigned to our unhappy fate.

Going into his chamber one afternoon, as he was beginning to play upon the guitar, I sat down upon a joint-stool, which was all the seat he had, that I might hear him more commodiously; and he placing himself upon the foot of his bed, played a very tender tune, to which he added a song, proper to express the despair to which love is reduced by the cruelty of his mistress. Having finished both these, I said to him smiling: Signior Cavalier, you will never be obliged to make such verses in your amours: you were not made to find the ladies cruel. You judge too favourably of me, replied he; I composed the lines you have just heard, to soften a heart which I thought adamant; and move a lady to relent, who treated me with the utmost severity. I will relate the story to you; for in it you will also find the reason of my being in this present hapless state.

C H A P. VI.

The Story of Don Gaston de Cogollos, and Donna Helena de Galisteo.

BEING sole heir to Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla, one of the richest dowagers in Old Castile, about four years since I set out from Madrid to Coria, to visit her. I had hardly got thither before my peace was disturbed by love. I lodged in an apartment whose windows were opposite to the lattices of a lady, who lived on the other side of the street, and whom I could easily see, her grates were so open, and we were at no great distance from each other. I did not neglect this opportunity, and I found my neighbour so beautiful, that I was immediately charmed with her. I informed her of it by such lively glances, that she could not but perceive them. Accordingly she understood them very well; but she was not a woman to value herself upon such a knowledge, much less, to make a return to my grimaces.

Enquiring what this dangerous fair one was called, who could make so sudden an impression upon the heart, I found her name was Donna Helena; that she was the only daughter of Don George de Galisteo, who was lord of a considerable manor, at no great distance from Coria: that she had often matches proposed for her, but that the father rejected all, intending to give her to his nephew Don Augustine de Olighera, who was allowed daily to see and converse with his cousin till the marriage should be concluded. This did not at all discourage me; on the contrary, I became the more enamoured; and the vain pleasure of supplanting a happy

rival, perhaps, incited me more than my love, to endeavour to carry my point. I continued then to cast the most passionate looks at my Helena; I likewise courted her woman Felicia by my eyes, as to beg her assistance; I even talked with my fingers; but these pieces of gallantry had no effect; I got no more good from the maid than the mistress, they were both equally cruel and inaccessible.

As they would not answer the language of the eyes, I had recourse to other interpreters. I sent spies to find out what acquaintance Felicia had in the town. They discovered, that her best friend was an old woman called Theodora, and that they frequently visited each other. Pleased with this information, I myself waited upon Theodora, and engaged her to serve me by my presents. She espoused my cause, promised to procure me a secret interview with her friend at her house, and brought it about the day following.

I am now rejoiced, says I to Felicia, since my pains have moved your pity. How much am I obliged to your friend, for having disposed you to grant me the satisfaction of your conversation! My Lord, answered she, Theodora has an absolute power over me. She has won me over to your interest; and if I could procure your happiness, you would in a short time arrive at the height of all your wishes; but, with all my good will, I do not know if I can be of any service to you. I must not flatter you; never did you undertake a more difficult enterprize. You are greatly taken with a lady, who is prepossessed in favour of another cavalier; and what sort of a lady? One of so proud and deceitful a temper, that if ever, by your constancy and addresses, you should happen to force a sigh from her, do not imagine her pride will ever suffer you to have the pleasure of hearing it. Alas! dear Felicia, exclaimed I in

a melancholy tone, why do you inform me of all the obstacles I have to surmount? This account stabs me to the heart; rather deceive me than make me despair. Thus saying, I took one of her hands, and pressing it between mine, I put a diamond worth three hundred pistoles upon her finger, saying to her at the same time such moving things, that I made her weep.

My discourse had too great an effect upon her, and she was too well satisfied with my behaviour, to leave me without comfort. Hereupon she removed the difficulties a little: My Lord, says she, what I have told you, ought not to deprive you entirely of hope. Your rival, it is true, is not hated; he has full liberty to visit his cousin; he can speak to her when he thinks proper; and this is what is favourable to you. Their being accustomed to see each other every day has rendered their conversation something insipid. They seem to me to leave each other without the least emotion, and to revisit without pleasure. One would swear they were already man and wife. In short, I do not perceive that my mistress has a passion for Don Augustine. Besides, as to personal accomplishments, there is such a difference between you and him, as cannot fail being observed to your advantage, by a young lady so nice as Donna Helena. Therefore do not despair, continue your gallantry, I will assist you. I will seize every opportunity of improving to your advantage all you do to please my mistress. It will be in vain for her to conceal her thoughts, I will discover her sentiments, notwithstanding all her dissimulation.

Thus saying, Felicia and I parted, very well satisfied with each other; and I began to ogle Don George's daughter afresh. I likewise entertained her with a serenade, wherein the verses you just heard were sung by a fine voice. After the concert, the servant, to found

her mistress, asked if she liked it. The voice, said Donna Helena, was very agreeable. And are not the words that were sung very moving? replied the maid. I paid not the least attention to them, answered the lady; I only listened to the tune. I even do not want to know who gave me this serenade. If that be the case, cried her woman, poor Don Gaston de Cógollos is mightily deceived, and very foolish in spending his time in looking at our lattices. Perhaps, says the mistress with a cool air, it is some other cavalier, who has just declared his passion to me in this concert. No, no, madam, replied Felicia, it is Don Gaston himself; by the same token that he met me this morning in the street, and begged me to inform you in his name, that he adores you, notwithstanding the cruelty wherewith you return his love; and, in short, that he should think himself the happiest of mankind, if you would suffer him to make known his passion by his courtship, and gallant entertainments. This discourse, added she, is a sufficient proof that I am right in my conjectures.

Helena immediately changed countenance, and looking sternly at her woman, You might very well, said she, have let alone entertaining me with this foolish nonsense. I desire you to trouble me no more with such informations; and if ever that rash young fellow should have the presumption to speak to you again, tell him to address himself to a person who sets a greater value upon his gallantry than I; and chuse a less impudent amusement than to be all day at his window, observing what I am busy with in my apartment.

Felicia told me all this verbatim at the next interview I had with her. She informed me, that I ought not to take her mistress's word literally, and would have persuaded me that things were the best in the world. For my part, I could discover no mystery therein, and did

not think that the text could be explained in my favour: I was very diffident of the comments she made thereupon. She laughed at my distrust, and desiring her friend to give her paper, pen, and ink, said, Signior Cavalier, write immediately to Donna Helena like a lover in despair. Draw her a lively picture of your sufferings, and particularly complain of her prohibiting your appearing at your windows. Promise to obey her, but let her also know that it will occasion your death. Give this a handsome turn, as you cavaliers know very well how, and I will be answerable for the rest. I hope the success will do me more honour than you are willing to allow to my penetration.

I should have been the first lover, that ever had so fair an opportunity of writing to his mistress, and yet took not the advantage of it. I wrote a most pathetic letter, and shewed it before I folded it up to Felicia, who, having read it, said, with a smile, that if the women knew how to charm the men, the men, to make amends, were not ignorant of the art of wheedling the women. This said, she took my billet-doux: after which, having told me to be sure to keep my windows shut for some days, she returned home to her mistress.

Madam, said she to Donna Helena, I have met Don Gaston. He did not fail accosting me, and would have held his seducing discourse with me. He asked me with a trembling voice, like a criminal, who expects his sentence, if I had spoken to you in his behalf. Then I being hasty, and willing to execute your orders faithfully, interrupted him abruptly. I railed at him bitterly, reproached him, and left him in the street quite surpris'd at my impudence. I am overjoyed, answered Donna Helena, that you have freed me from his importunity. But you should not have spoken so

roughly to him. A woman should always be mild. Madam, answered the maid, one cannot get rid of a passionate lover with words spoken in a soft tone. One cannot even compass it by flying into a rage and passion. For instance, this did not in the least discourage Don Gaston; having, as I said, stunned him with abuses, I went to your relation, where you sent me. That lady unfortunately detained me too long. I say too long, because at my return I met my gentleman again. I did not expect such a rencounter; the sight of him confounded me, and that to such a degree, that my tongue, which never fails me upon occasion, was now quite speechless. During this what did he? He slipped a paper into my hand, which I kept without knowing what I did, and immediately disappeared.

Thus saying, she drew my letter out of her bosom, and gave it as if in jest to her mistress; who having taken it as it were to divert herself, read it in good earnest, and seemed afterwards very reserved. I greatly blame you, Felicia, said she seriously, for receiving this note. What will Don Gaston think of it; and what ought I to think myself? Your acting in this manner makes me mistrust your fidelity, and gives him reason to suspect my being touched with his passion. Alas! perhaps he thinks at this instant, that I read his letter over and over with pleasure! See to what a disgrace you expose a woman of my spirit. Oh, no, Madam, replied the maid, he cannot have such a thought, or suppose he had, he should not have it long. I will tell him the first time I see him, that I have shewn you his letter: that you looked upon it with a cool air, and that you afterwards tore it disdainfully without so much as reading it. You may safely swear I never read it, said Donna Helena. It would perplex me greatly to repeat only two words of it. Not content with this,

Don George's daughter tore my billet, and prohibited her maid from ever talking to me again.

As I had promised never more to play the gallant at my windows, since the sight of me was disagreeable, I did not open them for several days, that my obedience might be the more moving. But instead of ogling, which was forbid me, I prepared to serenade my hard-hearted Helena afresh. For this purpose I placed myself one night under her balcony with the music; and the guitars had already struck up, when a cavalier came with a drawn sword to disturb the concert, by wounding the performers on the right and left, so that they all immediately run off. The rage of this madman excited also my fury. I advanced to punish him, and we began a severe combat. Donna Helena and her maid hearing the clashing of swords, looked through their lattices, and saw two men engaged. Hereupon they shrieked out so loud, that they raised Don George and his servants; who ran, as well as several neighbours, to part the fray, but came too late. Only one cavalier remained upon the field of battle, weltring in his blood, and almost lifeless, whom they perceived to be me. They carried me to my aunt's, where I was attended by the most skilful surgeons in the city.

Every body was sorry for me, and especially Donna Helena, who then discovered the bottom of her heart. Her dissembling gave way to her inclination. Would you believe it? She was no longer the woman who thought it a point of honour to seem insensible of my courtship. She became an affectionate lover, who gave herself up without reserve to her sorrow. She spent the remainder of the night in tears with her woman, and in cursing her cousin Don Augustine de Olighera, whom she imagined to have been the author of their grief, as in reality it was he who had so disagreeably

interrupted the serenade. Being as great a master of dissimulation as his cousin, he had discovered my intention, without taking any notice of it, and imagining she returned it, he had been guilty of this rash action, to shew he was not so patient as they thought him. Nevertheless this unhappy accident soon after gave place to a joy which made it forgotten. As dangerously as I was wounded, the surgeons' skill was not long in restoring me to health. I still kept my chamber, when my aunt Donna Eleonora went to Don George to ask Donna Helena for me. He gave his consent to this marriage the more willingly, in that he regarded Don Augustine as a man whom he might perhaps never behold again. But the worthy old gentleman was apprehensive lest his daughter should be averse to the match, because her cousin Olighera had had so much liberty to visit her, and time to win her affections: but she seemed so willing to obey her father in this point, that one may conclude that it is an advantage in Spain, as well as elsewhere, to be a new comer amongst the ladies.

As soon as I could have a private conversation with Felicia, she told me how very sensible her mistress had been of the unfortunate issue of my rencounter. So that being no longer able to doubt but that I was the Paris to my Helena, I blessed my wound, since the consequences had been so successful to my love. I obtained permission of Don George to speak to his daughter in her maid's presence. How sweet was this conversation to me! I pressed and conjured the lady so much to tell me if her father offered no violence to her inclinations, in delivering her up to my passion, that she owned it was not owing to her obedience only. After a confession so ravishing, I was wholly taken up with the care of making myself agreeable, and devising gallant entertainments, till our wedding-day should come;

which was to have been celebrated by a magnificent cavalcade, whereat all the nobility of Coria, and the parts adjacent, were to have appeared in the greatest splendour.

Hereupon I gave a noble ball at a stately country-seat of my aunt's, near the city-gates towards Manroi, at which Don George, with his daughter, and all his friends and relations, were present. There was a concert of vocal and instrumental music ready by my order, and a company of players to act a comedy. In the middle of the feast I was informed that there was a man in another room who desired to speak with me; whereupon I arose from table to see who it was. I found a stranger, who looked like a valet de chambre, and gave me a note, which I opened, and found contained the following words.

“ **I** F your honour is dear to you, as it ought to be to every knight of your order, you will not fail being to-morrow morning in the plain of Manroi. You will there find a gentleman who will give you satisfaction for the affront you have received from him; and if he is able, put it out of your power to have Donna Helena.

“ **DON AUGUSTINE de OLIGHERA.**”

If love is very predominant in the Spaniards, revenge is much more so. I could not read this challenge, and keep my temper; the very name of Don Augustine enraged me, which almost made me forget the indispensable part I was to act that day. I was tempted to slip from the company, and go immediately in search of my enemy. However, I constrained myself, for fear of disturbing the guests, and told the man who had brought the letter: Friend, you may inform the gentle-

man who sent you, that I have too great a desire to come to an engagement with him a second time, to fail being before sun-rise at the appointed place.

Having dismissed the messenger with this answer, I rejoined my company, and retook my place at table, where I composed my countenance so well, that nobody had any suspicion of what had passed. The remainder of the day I seemed like the rest taken up with the diversions of the entertainment, which at last ended at midnight. The assembly broke up, and every one re-entered the city after the same manner as they came out. For my part, I staid behind at the country-seat, under pretence of going to take the air next morning, which was only that I might be the sooner at the rendezvous. Instead of going to bed, I expected day-break with impatience; which as soon as I perceived, I mounted my best horse, and set out alone, as if to take a ride into the country. I advanced towards Manroi, and saw on the plain a man who came galloping towards me. I flew to meet him, in order to save him half the way; we soon met: it was my rival knight. Cavalier, said he to me insolently, it is with regret I encounter you a second time; but you yourself are alone to blame; you ought, after the adventure of the ferenade, to have resigned Don George's daughter with a good grace, or else to have been assured that you should not come off so, if you persist in your design of appearing agreeable in her eyes. You are too proud, replied I, of an advantage that is perhaps less owing to your address than to the darkness of the night: you do not remember that the fortune of war is uncertain. Not for me, answered he haughtily: and I am going to shew you, that both by day and night I know how to punish those impudent knights who have the assurance to encroach upon my pleasures.

Without replying, I immediately alighted, as did also Don Augustine; and fastening our horses to a tree, we began the combat with equal vigour. I will ingenuously own, that I had to do with an enemy who was a better master of fencing than I, although I had learned two years. I could not expose my life to a greater danger. Nevertheless, as it frequently happens that the strongest are overcome by the weakest, my rival, notwithstanding all his skill, received a thrust through his heart, and fell down breathless upon the spot.

I returned immediately to the country-seat, where I informed my valet de chambre, of whose fidelity I was well assured, of what had passed. Then I said to him, Dear Ramirez, take a good horse, before the officers of justice can have knowledge of this affair, and go inform my aunt of it. Desire her, in my name, to send me some gold and jewels, and come and meet me at Placentia. I shall put up at the first inn as you enter the city.

Ramirez discharged this commission with such diligence, that he arrived at Placentia within three hours after me. He informed me that Donna Eleonora was rather glad than sorry at a combat that repaired the affront I had received in our first engagement; and that she had sent me all her gold and jewels, that I might travel with some pleasure in foreign countries, till she should accommodate my affair:

That I may not tire your patience, I shall only tell you, that I crossed New Castile, in order to go into the kingdom of Valencia, and embark at Denia. I passed over into Italy, where I put myself in a condition to survey the several courts, and make a genteel appearance there.

Whilst I thus endeavoured, at a distance from my Helena, to delude, as much as I could, my love and disqui-

et, that lady, at Coria, secretly lamented my absence. Instead of approving her family's prosecuting me on account of Olighera's death, she wished that it might be made up, and my return be hastened by a speedy agreement. Half a year was already passed since she had lost me, and I believe her constancy would have always triumphed over time, if she had only had time to cope with; but she had yet more potent enemies. Don Blas de Combados, a gentleman of the west of Galicia, came to Coria to take possession of a noble inheritance, which Don Miguel de Caprara his cousin had in vain disputed with him; and finding that country more agreeable than his own, he settled there. Combados was very genteel, seemed good-natured and polite, and had the most insinuating wit in the world. He was not long in getting acquainted with the fashionable people of that city, and was informed of every one's circumstances.

He was presently informed that Don George had a daughter, whose dangerous beauty seemed only to inflame men to their ruin. This incited his curiosity. He was desirous of seeing so formidable a lady. For this purpose he sought her father's friendship, and gained so far upon him, that the old gentleman regarding him already as his son-in-law, gave him free access to his house, and leave to speak to Helena in his presence. The Galician was not long before he became enamoured with her; it was inevitable; he disclosed himself to Don George, who declared to him that he approved of his addresses, but that he would not constrain his daughter, but left her free mistress of the disposal of her own hand. Hereupon Don Blas put in practice all the gallantry he could devise to please the lady, who was quite insensible, so much was she prepossessed in my favour. However, Felicia was in the gentleman's interest, who had engaged her thereunto by his presents. She used her

utmost efforts to serve him. On the other hand, the father seconded the maid by his remonstrances, and nevertheless all they could both do for a whole year, was to torment Donna Helena, without being able to render her unfaithful to me.

Combados finding that Don George and Felicia in vain concerned themselves for him, proposed an expedient to them to surmount the obstinacy of so prejudiced a lover. This, said he, is what I have contrived. Let us counterfeit a letter from an Italian merchant to his correspondent at Coria, wherein, after mentioning several things relating to commerce, these words shall be inserted: 'There is lately arrived at the court of Parma a Spanish cavalier, called Don Gaston de Cogollos, who says he is nephew and only heir to a rich widow who lives at Coria, and who is called Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla. He courts the daughter of a great nobleman, but he will not obtain her before they are informed of the truth. I am desired to address myself to you for that purpose. Wherefore I intreat that you would send me word if you know this Don Gaston, and wherein his aunt's estate consists. The fate of this marriage depends upon your answer. Parma, the———&c.

This imposture seemed to the old man but a witty contrivance, a stratagem that was pardonable in lovers; and the waiting-maid, yet less scrupulous than her master, approved of it mightily. The invention seemed to them so much the better, in that they knew Helena to be a woman of a great spirit, and likely to fall into the snare immediately, provided she had no suspicion of the cheat. Don George took it upon himself to inform her of my change, and, to make the thing have a greater resemblance of reality, to let her speak to the merchant who had received this pretended letter from Parma. The project was executed as it was formed. The

father said to Donna Helena with an emotion, wherein, in all appearance, was a great deal spite; Daughter, I will no longer tell you that our relations continually intreat that I would never suffer Don Augustine's murderer to enter our family. I have now a stronger reason to desire you to disengage yourself from Don Gaston. Die with shame for having been so faithful to a perfidious unconstant wretch; here is a certain proof of his infidelity: read yourself that letter which a merchant of Coria has just received from Italy. Poor Helena takes the counterfeit paper trembling, reads it, weighs all the expressions, and remains quite overwhelmed with the news of my inconstancy. After this, some remains of tenderness made her shed a few tears; but she soon recalled her pride to her aid, and wiping her eyes, boldly said to her father: My Lord, you have been a witness of my weakness, be so likewise of the victory I gain over myself. It is done, I now only despise Don Gaston, I regard him as the basest of men; come, I am ready to follow Don Blas to the altar. Let my marriage precede that of the faithless wretch, who has repaid my love so ill. These words pleasing Don George, he embraced his daughter, praised the noble resolution she had taken, and hugging himself for the success of his stratagem, hastened to inform my rival of it.

In this manner was Donna Helena ravished from me. She resigned herself up rashly to Combados, without hearkening to her love, which pleaded for me in the bottom of her heart, without even doubting one minute of a report, which ought not to have met with so much credulity in a lover. The proud woman only paid attention to her pride; the resentment of the injury she imagined I had done her beauty got the better of her passion. However, not long after her marriage, she felt some remorse for having been so hasty. She ima-

gined, that the merchant's letter might be forged, and this suspicion made her very uneasy. But the amorous Don Blas did not leave his wife time to nourish any thoughts contrary to her repose. He only thought how to amuse her, and he succeeded by a continual series of different diversions, which he was so ingenious as to invent.

So gallant a spouse greatly pleased her, and they both lived in perfect union, when my aunt made up my affair with Don Augustine's relations. She wrote immediately to Italy, to acquaint me therewith. I was then at Reggio in the Lower Calabria; I crossed over into Sicily, and from thence to Spain; in a word, I reached Coria mounted on the wings of love. Donna Eleonora not having informed me of the marriage of Don George's daughter, told me of it when I arrived, and observing that it grieved me: You are to blame, nephew, said she, to seem so sensible for the loss of a lady who has proved faithless to you. Be ruled by me; banish from your memory a person who is unworthy of being there.

My aunt not knowing that Donna Helena was imposed on, was in the right to speak thus to me, and could not have given me better counsel. Accordingly I promised to follow it, or at least to affect an air of indifference, if I were not capable of subduing my passion. However, I could not resist the curiosity to know how this marriage had been brought about. In order to inform myself of every particular, I resolved to address myself to Felicia's friend, that is to say Theodora, whom I have before mentioned. I went to her, and accidentally found Felicia there, who expecting nothing less than the sight of me, was confounded, and would have gone away, to have avoided the explanation she rightly judged I should demand of her; Why do you fly me? said I; is not the

perjured Helena satisfied with having sacrificed me? has she forbid your hearing my complaints? or do you only endeavour to avoid me, to make your court to an ingrate for having refused to listen to them?

My Lord, answered the maid, I will freely confess to you, that your presence confounds me. I cannot behold you again without being distracted with remorse. My mistress has been deceived, and I have been so unhappy as to be an accomplice in the fraud. O heavens! exclaimed I, what do you dare to tell me? Then she informed me of the stratagem Combados had made use of to deprive me of Donna Helena; and perceiving that her recital pierced me to the heart, she said every thing in her power to comfort me; she even offered me her good offices to her mistress, promising to disabuse her, and to acquaint her with my despair; in short, to spare no pains to mitigate the rigour of my fate: and she gave me such hopes as a little alleviated my misery.

I pass over the great contradiction she met with from Donna Helena, in endeavouring to gain her consent to see me: however, she succeeded. It was resolved between them that I should be admitted privately to Don Blas's the first time he went to an estate, where he used frequently to go a hunting, and staid generally a day or two. This design was not long in being put in execution: the husband set out for the country. Care was taken to inform me of it, and introduce me one night into his wife's apartment.

I would have begun the conversation by reproaches, but they prevented me. It is in vain, said the lady, to recollect what is past. It is not our business now to move each other to compassion; and you are deceived, if you think me disposed to flatter your inclinations. I declare to you, Don Gaston, I have given my consent to this secret interview; I have yielded to the en-

treaties that have been made me, only personally to inform you, that for the future you must only think of forgetting me. Perhaps I should be better satisfied with my fate, if it were united to yours, but since heaven has ordained it otherwise, I shall be obedient to its will.

What, Madam, answered I, is it not enough to have been deprived of you? is it not enough to see the happy Don Blas quiet possessor of the only person I could love, must I also banish you my thoughts? would you deprive me of my love, and rob me of the only good that now remains to me? Ah! cruel, do you think that it is possible for a man whom you have once enslaved to recover his heart? Know your own power better than you do, and cease vainly exhorting me to forget you. Well then, replied she hastily, cease also hoping that I will repay your passion with any acknowledgiment. I have but one word to say to you: the wife of Don Blas shall never be Don Gaston's mistress. Act agreeable to this intelligence. Fly: let us quickly end a conversation, wherewith I reproach myself, notwithstanding the purity of my intentions, and which I should think it unlawful to prolong.

This speech of the lady's depriving me of all hope, I fell at her feet. I spoke in the most moving terms I could think of, and employed even tears to soften her: but all this only conduced perhaps to excite some sentiments of pity, which she was very careful not to discover, and which were sacrificed to her duty. Having made use of all manner of tender expressions, prayers, and tears to no purpose, my love suddenly changed into fury. I drew my sword to kill myself before the eyes of the inexorable fair, who no sooner perceived my intention, than she threw herself upon me to prevent the consequences. Stop, Cogollos, said she. Is this all the care you take of my reputation? By thus depriving your-

self of life, you go to dishonour me, and make my husband pass for a murderer.

Instead of paying the attention to these words that they deserved, I only thought how to allude the attempts the mistress and the servant made to save me from myself. And undoubtedly I should have succeeded but too soon, if Don Blas, who had been informed of our interview, and who, instead of going into the country, had concealed himself behind the hangings to hear our discourse, had not immediately joined them. Don Gaston, cried he, seizing on my arm, recall your banished reason, and do not foolishly give way to the furious passion that agitates you.

Is it for you, said I to Combados, interrupting him, to divert me from my resolution? you ought rather yourself to pierce me to the heart. My love, unfortunate as it is, is offensive to you. Is it not enough you surprise me in your wife's apartment? needs there any more to incite you to revenge? kill me, to rid yourself of a man, who cannot but love Helena, as long as he lives. In vain, replied Don Blas, do you endeavour to engage my honour to put you to death. You are sufficiently punished for your rashness, and I am so well satisfied with my wife for her virtuous sentiments, that I pardon the occasion she has taken to make them known. Cogollos, added he, do not yield to your despair like a faint-hearted lover; rather boldly submit to necessity.

By such-like discourses the prudent Galician by degrees appeased my wrath, and revived again my virtue: I withdrew, with an intention never to look upon Helena, and the places where she resided again, and two days afterwards I returned to Madrid. There, resolving no more to mind any thing but making my fortune, I began to appear at court, and procure myself friends. But I was so unhappy as to attach myself particularly to

the Marquis de Villareal, a nobleman of the first rank in Portugal, who is now confined in the castle of Alicante, on suspicion of intending to free that kingdom from the subjection of Spain.

The Duke de Lerma being sensible that I had entered into a strict friendship with this Lord, had me seized and confined in this castle. That minister believes that I would be an accomplice in such a design; he could not have done a more sensible outrage to a man, who is of noble rank and a Castilian.

Here Don Gaston stopt, and I endeavoured to comfort him, saying, Signior Cavalier, your honour cannot suffer by this disgrace, which in the end will certainly turn to your advantage. When the Duke de Lerma is made sensible of your innocence, he will undoubtedly give you a considerable employment, to re-establish the reputation of a gentleman who has been accused of treason without the least foundation of truth.



C H A P. VII.

Gil Blas receives a Visit from Scipio, who comes to the Tower of Segovia to seek his Master, and tells him a great deal of News.

TOrdesillas now entering the room, interrupted our farther conversation. He addressed himself to me thus. Signior Gil Blas, I am just come from a young fellow, who has been at the prison-gate, and enquired if you was not here under confinement; and upon my having refused to tell him, he appeared very uneasy. Noble Governour, said he with tears in his eyes, I most humbly beg that you would inform me whether the Signior de Santillane is in this castle. I am his head servant, and you will do a charitable action in suffering

me to see him. You have the character of a humane gentleman in Segovia, I hope you will not deny me the favour of a minute's conversation with my dear master, who is more unfortunate than guilty. In short, continued Don Andrea, the young man has expressed such a desire to talk with you, that I have promised to introduce him to you this evening.

I told Tordefillas, that he could not do me a greater pleasure, than in letting me see that servant, who probably might have something of importance to inform me of. I impatiently expected the moment when I should again have a sight of my faithful Scipio, for I did not in the least doubt but that it was him, nor was I deceived. He was admitted into the tower at night; and when he beheld me, he broke out into extraordinary transports of joy, which were only to be equalled by mine. For my part, I was so ravished at seeing him, that I stretched out my arms to him, and he clasped me in his without ceremony. The master and the secretary were confounded in this embrace, so happy were they in beholding each other again.

Having both a little disengaged ourselves, I asked Scipio in what condition he had left my house. You have no longer any, replied he; and to save you the trouble of asking question upon question, I will give you a concise account of what has passed at your home. Your effects have been plundered both by the alguazil's men and your own servants, who imagining you to be already quite lost, have seized on every thing they could lay their hands upon on trust for their wages. Happily for you, I had the address to save from their clutches two large bags of double pistoles, which I got out of your strong box, and are in safety. Salero, into whose custody I have put them, will restore them to you when you get out of this tower, where I dare say you will not be

long a pensioner to his majesty, since you were seized without the Duke de Lerma's knowing any thing of the matter.

I asked Scipio how he knew his Excellency was not in the least accessary to my disgrace. O, replied he, that is a thing whereof I am well informed. An acquaintance of mine, who is confident to the Duke d'Uzeda, has told me every circumstance of your imprisonment. Calderona, said he, being informed by a valet, that the Signiora Sirena received the Prince of Spain in the night under another name, and that it was the Count de Lemos who managed this intrigue, by the interposition of the Signior de Santillane, resolved to revenge himself both of them and his mistress. That he might the better succeed therein, he goes secretly and informs the Duke d'Uzeda of the whole affair. The Duke, very well pleased to have so fine an opportunity to ruin his enemy, immediately took the advantage of it. He informed the King of what he had just been told, and painted to him in such lively colours the dangers to which the Prince had been exposed, that he roused his Majesty's anger. So that he immediately had Sirena confined in the convent de Filles Repentines; banished the Count de Lemos, and condemned Gil Blas to be for ever imprisoned in the tower of Segovia.

This, continued Scipio, is what I have heard from my friend; whereby you see your misfortune is the hardy-work of the Duke d'Uzeda, or rather of Calderona.

This account of my affairs made me hope in time they might be re-established; that the Duke de Lerma, being affronted at his nephew's exile, would not be idle in endeavouring to recall that nobleman to court; and I flattered myself, that his Excellency would also remember me. What a fine thing is hope! it comforted me at once for the loss of my plundered effects, and

rendered me as chearful and glad as if I had reason to be so. Far from looking upon my prison as an unfortunate lodging, where I might perhaps remain my whole life, it seemed rather to me the means fortune would make use of, to raise me to some great post. For I reasoned within myself thus: Don Fernando Borgia, Father Jerome of Florence, and especially Friar Louis of Aliaga, (who is obliged to him for his place about the King), are of the prime minister's party. With the help of these powerful friends, his Excellency will defeat all his enemies; or else the face of affairs may be very soon altered: his Majesty is in a very bad state of health. When he is no more, the Prince will begin his reign by recalling the Count de Lemos, who will immediately release me hence, and present me to the new monarch, who will overload me with favours. Thus being already full of the pleasing hope of my future good fortune, I hardly any longer felt my present evils. I believe indeed, that the two bags of doubloons, which my secretary informed me had been deposited with the goldsmith, contributed as much to the sudden change, as the hopes aforementioned.

I had too good a proof of Scipio's zeal and integrity not to let him know it; I offered him half the money he had saved from the pillage; which he would not accept. I expect, says he, another mark of your acknowledgment. His speech surprising me no less than his refusal, I asked what I could do for him. Let us never part, replied he. Let me unite my fortune to yours; I have such an affection for you, as I never before had for any master. And as for me, said I, my boy, I will assure you, you do not love one that is ungrateful. From the first moment you came to offer me your service I liked you. We have undoubtedly both been born under Libra or Gemini, which are, as they say, the two

constellations that unite mankind. I willingly accept of the proposed union; and to begin it, I will ask the keeper to shut you up with me in the tower.

I shall be extremely glad of that, cried he; you have prevented me: I was going to beg you to desire this favour; your company is dearer to me than liberty: I will only go sometimes to Madrid to breathe the office-air, and see if there has happened no change at court, that may be in your favour. So that I will serve you as well for a confidant, as for a courier, and a spy.

These advantages were too considerable for me to deprive myself of them, for which reason I retained with me so useful a person, with the permission of the obliging keeper, who readily consented to my being happy at so easy a rate.



C H A P. VIII.

Scipio makes his first Journey to Madrid. What was the Motive and the Success. Gil Blas falls sick. The Consequences of his Sicknefs.

IT is a common saying, that our servants are our greatest enemies; but I have found by experience, that when they prove affectionate and faithful, they are our best friends. After the zeal Scipio had shewed for my service, I could regard him as no other than a brother, wherefore no more subordination between Gil Blas and his secretary; no more ceremonies between them; they were chamber fellows, and had but one bed and one table.

Scipio was extremely witty and agreeable. One might justly have surnamed him the good-humoured young fellow. Besides this, he was very sensible, and

I found an advantage in his counsel. Friend, says I to him one day, I imagine it would not be amiss to write to the Duke de Lerma; it can produce no ill effect; what is your opinion of it? Why, answered he, great men are so changeable, that it is uncertain whether your letter will be received. However, I am for your writing at all events. Although the minister loves you, do not depend upon his friendship for the care of calling you into his remembrance. These sorts of protectors easily forget those persons whose names they hear no longer sounding in their ears.

This may be but too true, answered I, yet I have a better opinion of my patron; I know his goodness; and am persuaded that he sympathizes with my pains, and that they present themselves incessantly before his eyes: undoubtedly he only waits till the King's anger is over, to set me at liberty. So much the better, rejoined he: I wish you may judge rightly of his Excellency. Implore then his assistance in a very pathetic letter, I promise you to deliver it into his own hand. Upon this I immediately called for pen and ink, and composed a piece of eloquence which Scipio thought very sublime, and Tordeillas praised even more than the archbishop of Grenada's homilies.

I flattered myself, that the Duke of Lerma, would have been affected with my melancholy account of the miserable state wherein I really was not; and in this belief I sent my courier to Madrid, who no sooner got thither than he went to that minister's, where he met with a valet de chambre, who had a regard for me, and procured him an opportunity of speaking to the Duke. May it please your Grace, said Scipio to his Excellency, at the same time presenting him the packet wherewith he was intrusted, one of your most faithful servants, who lies upon straw in a dismal dungeon, in the tower of

Segovia, most humbly conjures you to read this letter, which a goaler out of compassion allowed him to write. The minister opened the letter, and ran it over; but although he saw therein a picture capable of softening the most adamant heart, far from seeming affected with it, he raised his voice, and said with a furious look to the courier, before some persons who could hear him; Friend, tell Santillane that I think him very impudent in presuming to address himself to me, after having been guilty of so base an action, for which he is so justly chastised. He is a wretch, who must no longer rely upon my favour, and whom I deliver up to the King's displeasure.

Notwithstanding Scipio's assurance, this speech confounded him. However, in spite of his amazement, he would have interceded for me: my Lord, cried he, this unhappy prisoner will die for grief when he is told your Excellency's answer. The Duke made no reply to my mediator but by frowning upon him, and turning his back. Thus did the minister treat me, the better to conceal the part he had in the Prince of Spain's amorous intrigue; and this is what all petty agents ought to expect, who are employed by great men in their secret and dangerous negotiations.

My secretary returning to Segovia, and informing me of the success of his commission, I was again plunged in that dreadful abyss wherein I found myself the first day of my imprisonment. I even thought myself more unhappy, since I had no longer the Duke of Lerma's protection. My courage failed, and whatever they could say to restore it, I became again a prey to the deepest melancholy, which insensibly brought upon me an acute disease.

The keeper, who was concerned for my preservation, thinking it was his duty to call in physicians to

my assistance, brought me two, who had both of them very much the look of being very faithful servants to the goddess * Libitina. Signior Gil Blas, said he, presenting them to me, here are two sons of Hippocrates, who are come to see you, and will presently restore you to health again. I was so prepossessed against all doctors of physic, that I undoubtedly should have given these but a very scurvy reception, had I been ever so little fond of life. But I was then so weary of it, that I thought myself obliged to Tordesillas for bringing them to me.

Signior Cavalier, said one of these doctors to me, you must, before we proceed, repose a confidence in us. I do a perfect one, replied I; with your assistance, I hope I shall soon be cured of all my ails. Yes, with the help of God, rejoined he, so you shall; at least we shall do all in our power. In effect, these gentlemen did their business wonderfully, and put me into such a fair way, that I was visibly on my journey to the Stygian lake. Don Andrea despairing of my cure, had also brought a Franciscan to dispose me to die well: already had the good father discharged that office and retired: and for myself, imagining that my latter end drew near, I made a sign to Scipio to come to me. Dear friend, said I, with a feeble voice, so much was I weakened by their medicines and bleedings, I leave you one of the bags that are in Gabriel's possession, and I conjure you to carry the other into Asturia, to my parents, who must be in need of it, if yet in this world. But alas! I am very much afraid they could not support under my hard-heartedness. The report Muscada made them of my unnatural behaviour, has perhaps occasioned their death. If heaven has preserved them, notwithstanding the indifference wherewith I repaid

* She presided over funerals.

their tenderness, you may give them the bag of doubloons, and beg them in my name to forgive me for not behaving more affectionately to them; and if they are no more, I beg that you would employ this money in having masses said both for the repose of their souls and my own. Thus saying, I reached out one hand, which he bathed in tears, without being able to utter one word, so much was the poor young fellow afflicted for my loss. This is an evident proof, that the tears of an heir are not always smiles concealed under a mask.

I expected then to make my exit; however, it happened otherwise. My doctors having withdrawn, and left nature at liberty to operate, saved me by that means. The fever, which they imagined was to carry me off, went away, as it were to give them the lie. I recovered by degrees, and, by the greatest good fortune imaginable, my illness was succeeded by a perfect tranquillity of mind. I had then no need of being comforted. I preserved all the contempt for riches and honours, that the opinion of an approaching dissolution had instilled into me, and being restored to myself, I blessed my disgrace. I returned thanks to Heaven for it as for a particular favour, and determined to return no more to court, even if the Duke of Lerma would recall me. I rather proposed to myself, if ever I regained my liberty, to purchase a cottage, and live like a philosopher.

Scipio approved of my design, and told me, that to hasten the execution of it, he intended to take another journey to Madrid to solicit my enlargement. I have a thought, added he, come into my head; I am acquainted with a person, who may serve you. It is the favourite maid to the Prince of Spain's nurse; a sensible wench. I will set her to work for you upon her mistress; I will use my utmost efforts to release you

from this tower, which is still but a prison, however well treated you are therein. What you say is very true, replied I; go, friend, begin your negotiation as soon as possible: I wish we were already settled in our rural retreat.



CHAP. IX.

Scipio goes a second Time to Madrid. How and upon what Conditions he had Gil Blas restored to Liberty. What Course they both took on being delivered from the Tower of Segovia, and what Conversation passed between them.

MY confident then returned again to Madrid; and in the interim, I, in expectation of his return, applied myself to reading. Tordeillas supplied me with more books than I had occasion for; which he borrowed of an old commander, who could not read, and yet had an excellent library, to give himself the air of a learned man. For my part, I liked the good moral authors best, because I found every minute in them something that flattered my hatred to the court, and my love of retirement.

Three weeks passed away, and I never heard a word of my manager, who at last returned, and cheerfully said, For this time, Signior de Santillane, I bring you happy tidings. The nurse will espouse your interest. Her maid, at my entreaty, and for a hundred pistoles which I have consigned to her, has been so good as to speak to the Prince of Spain for your enlargement; and the Prince, who, as I have frequently told you, can deny her nothing, has promised to intercede with the King his father, to set you at liberty. I came as soon as possible to inform you of my success, and am going immediate-

ly back again, to put the finishing stroke to my work. Thus saying, he left me, and departed for court.

His third journey was not long; my gentleman returned at the week's end, telling me, that the Prince had obtained my liberty of the King, but not without trouble. This was confirmed to me the same day by the keeper, who came to embrace me, saying: My dear Gil Blas, God be praised, you are free. The prison doors are no longer shut against you, but it is upon two conditions, which perhaps will not be very agreeable to you, and which I am obliged to tell you with regret. His Majesty forbids your appearing at court, and commands you to quit both the Castiles in a month: I am not well pleased that they have forbid you the court. And I am very much rejoiced at it, replied I. I ingenuously confess, that I expected but one favour from the King, and he has done me two.

Being assured then, that I was no longer a prisoner, I hired two mules, whereon my confident and I mounted next day, after I had taken leave of Cogollos, and returned Tordeillas a thousand thanks for all the testimonies of friendship I had received from him. We departed merrily for Madrid, to receive our two bags, each of them containing five hundred doubloons, from Signior Gabriel. As we were upon the road, my associate said to me, If we have not cash enough to purchase a magnificent estate, at least we may buy a competency. If we should have but a hut, replied I, I should be content with my lot. Though I am hardly in the middle of my age, I am quite tired of the world, and I design for the future only to live for myself. I must also inform you that I have formed to myself an agreeable notion of a rural life, an idea, that delights me, and makes me enjoy it beforehand. Methinks I already have a prospect of the meadows enamelled, hear

the nightingales sing, and the rivulets murmur: at one time I imagine I am diverting myself with hunting, and at another time with fishing. Paint in your imagination different pleasures that wait us in our solitude, and you will be charmed as well as me. As to our food, the plainest will be the best. A mouthful of bread may satisfy us when we are oppressed with hunger. We shall eat it with an appetite that will make us think it excellent. Pleasure does not consist in the delicacy of exquisite viands, it is all within ourselves; and this is so true, that I do not eat the heartiest at tables that I see furnished with the greatest variety of dishes.

With your leave, Signior Gil Blas, said my secretary, interrupting me, I am not altogether of your mind about this pretended frugality to which you bid me welcome. Why must we live like Diogenes? If we do not fare so very hard, we shall be never the more unhealthy. Take my advice, since we have (Heaven be praised) wherewith to render our retirement agreeable, do not let us make it the abode of famine and poverty.

After we have purchased an estate, let us stock it with good wines, and every other kind of provisions, that are proper for men of wit, who do not quit the conversation of men to renounce the conveniences of life, but rather more quietly to enjoy them. It is a saying of Hesiod, That what one has in the house, does not make us uneasy, whereas what one has not may. It is better, continues he, to be in possession of all things necessary at one's house, than to be desirous of having them.

Hey-day, Mr. Scipio, said I, interrupting him in my turn, you understand the Greek poets! In what manner, pray, did you get acquainted with Hesiod? It was at a learned man's, replied he. I served a pedant some

time at Salamanca, who was a famous commentator. He would make you a large volume in an instant. He composed it of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin passages, which he extracted from the books in his library, and translated into Spanish. As I was his transcriber, I still remember several sentences, as remarkable as that I have just quoted. If that be the case, answered I, you have your memory well embellished. But to return to our project; in which of the Spanish kingdoms do you judge it best for us to settle our philosophical residence? I give Arragon the preference, replied my confident. We may find there a vast number of charming places, where we may lead a very agreeable life. I agree to it then, says I, let us stop at Arragon. We may find an abode there which may supply us with all the pleasures whereof I have so pleasing an idea.



CHAP. X.

What they did on their Arrival at Madrid. Gil Blas meets his Friend the Baron de Steinbach in the Street; the Success of this Rencounter.

HAVING arrived safely at Madrid, we alighted at a small ready-furnished house, where Scipio had lodged in his journeys thither; not long after we went to Salero's, to draw our doubloons out of his hands. He gave us a gracious reception, and expressed great joy at seeing me at liberty. I ingenuously own to you, added he, I was so sensible of your disgrace, that it gave me a disgust to an alliance with courtiers. Their fortunes greatly resemble castles in the air; for which reason I have married my daughter Gabriela to a wealthy merchant. You are greatly to be

commended, answered I; for, besides his fortune's being upon a more solid bottom, a citizen who becomes father-in-law to a man of quality is not always pleased with the gentleman his son-in-law.

After this, coming to the point, I said, Signior Gabriel, do us the favour, if you please, to give us the 2000 pistoles that—Your money is all ready, said he, interrupting me; and taking us to his cabinet, he shewed us two bags, whereon these words were written on tickets: Signior Gil Blas de Santillane is the master of these bags. There, said he, there is every farthing of your money that I received.

I returned Salero many thanks for the favour he had done me, and being very well comforted for the loss of his daughter, we walked off with the bags to our lodging, where we began to count our double pistoles. They were all there but about fifty, which had been disbursed for the purchase of my liberty. All our thoughts were now employed in putting ourselves in a condition to go to Arragon. My secretary took upon him the charge of buying a calash and two mules; and on my side I made a provision of linen and cloaths. Whilst I was thus busied in running up and down the streets, and making my bargains, I met the Baron de Steinbach, the officer of the German guard who had educated and brought up Don Alphonso.

I saluted the German cavalier, who likewise remembering me, came to me and embraced me: I am very glad, said I, to see your lordship well, and at the same time to have an opportunity to be informed how Signior Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso de Leyva are. I can give you a certain account of them, answered he, since they are both actually in Madrid, and, what is more, living with me. It is about three months since they came to this city, to thank his majesty for a favour Don

Alphonso has received in acknowledgment for the service his ancestors have done the state. He has been appointed governor of Valencia, without requesting that post, or begging any one to solicit for him. Nothing could be more gracious; and this shews that our noble king loves to reward bravery.

Although I was better acquainted with this affair than Steinbach, yet I did not seem to know any thing of what he told me. But I expressed such great impatience to pay my respects to my old master, that he carried me that moment to his house to satisfy me. I was desirous of trying Don Alphonso, and judging by the reception he gave me, whether he still loved me. I found him in a parlour playing at chess with the Baroness de Steinbach. He left his game as soon as I entered, and advancing towards me in a transport, he embraced me, and said with an air that shewed real pleasure: Santillane, you are then at last restored to me, I am overjoyed at it. It was your own fault, that we did not keep together; I intreated you, if you remember, not to leave the castle of Leyva, but you was deaf to my request. However, I do not blame you, I even take the motive of your retreat kindly. But you ought to have let me hear from you since that time, and have prevented me from searching in vain for you at Grenada, where my brother-in-law Don Fernando wrote me that you were settled.

After this little reproach, added he, let me know what business you follow in this city, undoubtedly you have some employment here. Be assured that I interest myself more than ever in your welfare. My lord, replied I, it is not yet four months since I had a considerable post at court. I had the honour of being secretary and confidant to the Duke de Lerma. Can I believe my ears? cried Don Alphonso very much surpris-

sed: What, was you intrusted with that prime minister's secrets? I gained his favour, answered I, and lost it after the manner I am going to tell you. Then I acquainted him with all the story, and ended my recital at the resolution I had taken to purchase a cottage, with the little that yet remained of the great fortune I had amassed, and to pass the remainder of my days in retirement and tranquillity.

Don Cæsar's son having attentively listened to me, said: Dear Gil Blas, you are sensible that I have always loved you; you shall no longer be the sport of fortune. I will put you above her power, by making you master of an estate whereof she cannot deprive you. As you intend to live in the country, I will make you a present of a small estate which we have near Lirias, four leagues from Valencia. You know it. It is a present we can make you without incommoding ourselves in the least. I am very certain that my father will not be against it, and that Seraphina will be greatly rejoiced at it.

I threw myself at the feet of Don Alphonso, who immediately raised me up. I kissed his hand, and his good-will pleasing me more than his present: My Lord, said I, your behaviour ravishes me. The gift you have made me is so much the more agreeable, as it precedes the knowledge of a service I have had the pleasure to do you; and I would rather owe it to your generosity than gratitude. This discourse surprised my governor, who did not fail enquiring what this pretended service was. I told him the whole affair, which redoubled his astonishment. He, as well as the Baron de Steinbach, did not in the least imagine that the government of Valencia had been given him by my interest. However, not being able any longer to doubt it: Gil Blas, said he, since it is you who have done

me so good an office, I do not design to confine myself to the small estate at Lirias; I offer you besides that a pension of two thousand ducats a-year.

I beg to be excused from receiving that, Signior Don Alphonso, cried I interrupting him at these words, do not again revive my covetousness. I have had but too good experience, that riches tend only to corrupt the morals. I willingly accept of your little competency at Lirias. I shall pass my time happily with the money I have elsewhere. Instead of desiring more I should sooner consent to lose what superfluity I possess. Riches are but troublesome in a retirement where one desires only to live quietly.

During this conversation, Don Caesar appeared, who shewed no less joy at beholding me than his son; and when he was acquainted with the service I had done his family, he pressed me to accept the pension; which I again refused. In short, the father and the son took me to a notary, where the grant was drawn up, which they both signed with more pleasure than they would have done any deed that had been to their profit. The contract being dispatched, they gave it to me, telling me the estate at Lirias was no longer theirs, and that I might go take possession when I thought proper. Then they returned to the Baron de Steinbach's, and I immediately went to my lodging, where I ravished my secretary with admiration, when I informed him that we had an estate in the kingdom of Valencia, and told him how I had made the acquisition. How much may this inheritance be worth? said he. Five hundred ducats a-year, replied I; and you may take my word for it, it is an admirable solitude. I am well acquainted with it, as I have been there several times as steward to the Lords of Leyva. It is situated on the banks of the

Guadalaviar, in a village of five or six cottages, and in as delightful a country as any in the world.

The greatest happiness of all, cried my Secretary, is, that it abounds with wild fowl, as well as Benecarlo wine, and excellent muscadine. Let us therefore, my patron, set out as soon as possible for our hermitage, and forsake the noise and bustle of the city. I am as desirous of being there as thee, replied I, but I must in the first place go into Asturia, to seek my parents, who are in no very good condition there, and carry them to Lirias, there quietly to pass the remainder of their days. Heaven has perhaps provided me this asylum for their reception, and will punish me if I should neglect it. This proposal met with Scipio's approbation, and he even incited me to put it in execution. Let us be as expeditious as possible, said he, I have already secured a calash; let us purchase mules, and take the road to Oviedo. The sooner we are gone the better, replied I, for I look upon it as an indispensable duty to share the pleasures of my retirement with the authors of my birth. We shall not be long in dispatching this journey, and then returning to our hamlet, I will write the two following Latin verses in letters of gold over the door of my house.

*Inveni portum. Spes et fortuna valete.
Sat me lufistis; ludite nunc alias.*



The END of the THIRD VOLUME.

